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ABSTRACT

This report describes a nationwide study of female children and the family in rural India. The objectives of the study were to generate data on the situation of female children; to identify the major problems related to their status; to start a series of programs to help remedy those shortcomings; and to assist communities, and women in particular. Demographic data, including family migration, occupation, economic status, government programs received, housing, family structure, education, and occupation, were obtained. Chapter 1 describes the study's rationale, methodology, and conceptual framework. Chapter 2 provides a profile of households. Chapter 3 reports vast gender bias inherent in the socialization of children, including gender expectations, parent-daughter activities, and behavioral restrictions related to gender are reported. Chapter 4 presents data on school attendance, participation in extra-curricular activities, school facilities, dropouts, reasons for not attending school, parental levels of education, birth order and school attendance, and the view of female children's ideal level of education. Chapter 5 includes data on mother's health, immunization, nutrition, health treatment, appearance, and environmental factors. In chapter 6, survey results on menstruation knowledge, puberty rites, taboos, and restrictions are reported. Chapter 7 reports the percentage of female children performing economic activity. Chapter 8 includes six case studies and five brief case profiles. Chapter 9 presents the profiles of the geographical areas involved in this study. Chapter 10 summarizes findings, state policy and programs, and directions for action. (WP)

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THE GIRL CHILD AND THE FAMILY

An Action Research Study

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1994

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An Action - Research Study

Compiled and Edited by

S. ANANDALAKSHMY

Sponsored by

The Department of Women & Child Development
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The energy and strength of the collective activity of women engaged in Women's Studies has characterised this project from its inception to its conclusion. This acknowledgement is really an Editor's note to record, with humility and gratitude, the various contributions of the several women scholars, activists, teachers, administrators and research workers who have made this effort possible.

The Indian Association for Women's Studies had at its Biennial Conference in Waltair passed a resolution to take up a country-wide collaborative study on identified relevant issues. Madhuri Shah, Chairperson, University Grants Commission who had the vision and the will to put Women's Studies on the academic map of India, sensed the importance of such a decision. The SNDT Women's University unit on Research in Women's Studies established by her was the premier institution of its type. It was ideally suited for the brainstorming session that was organised there as a sequel to the Biennial Conference of the Indian Association for Women's Studies. The decision to undertake research studies that would be jointly done by several individuals, backed by their academic institutions had been taken and this was now planned out as a project.

The South Asian region, with the countries having cultural and historical commonalities recognised the need for a congenial environment for the growth and development of children. The second SAARC summit held at Bangalore in 1986 stressed the important of enhancing public consciousness on the rights of children and the need for member nations to adopt the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. It was at the SAARC Summit of 1988 that the issue of children, particularly girl children, was highlighted. The girl child in South Asia was considered symbolic of the neglected aspects in our policies. With this as background, it was proposed that 1990 be declared as the year of the Girl Child in the SAARC region.

The possibility of linking different regions of the country through using the network of the newly set up Women's Studies Units in the Universities, under the aegis of the University Grants Commission is an inspiration to be credited to Vina Mazumdar. Vina Mazumdar, the architect and the moving force behind "Towards Equality" the report on the Status of Women in India, in the mid-seventies, had the insight and imagination to arrange a meeting point between institutions committed to the same cause: Directors of Women's Studies Centres set up at different Universities and the Government of India's Dept. of Women and Child Development who had declared 1990 as the Year of the Girl Child.

This linking up of different institutions across the wide span of the country enabled the study to be as representative as possible.

Maithreyi Krishnaraj, Director, Research Centre from Women's Studies (SNDT) conducted the initial sessions. Two meetings were held, one in Sept. 1989 and the other in Dec. 1989, with some Directors of the Women's Studies Centres and invited experts. Following this, the first planning workshop for the study was organised at University of Kerala by Vasantha Ramkumar. At this meeting the thrust areas for a study of the Girl Child were agreed upon. All the deliberations were conducted democratically with every participant having a voice in the design of the study.

Uma Pillai, Joint Secretary, Dept. of Women and Child Development joined in the informal consultative meetings held in Delhi in the next two months. She was fully supported by Secretary Shukla, who gave the go-ahead to the project. An important decision made at that time was to have activity and intervention built into the research design itself. It was not merely a study of the status quo, but one which would identify programmes for the girl child as entry points and devise interventions which would begin to ameliorate conditions even while they were in the process of being surveyed. The terming of the project as "action research" met with the enthusiastic approval of Meera Seth, Secretary, Dept. of Women and Child Development who had just taken over as Secretary. She put the weight of her authority behind the study on the Girl Child and the Family.

The other details of how we proceeded are included in the opening pages of the first chapter. There were many persons who participated in the design and execution of the study: those who served as Project Directors, Advisors, Officers of the Dept. of Women and Child Development, Ministry of HRD and members of the Coordination Committee.

Particular mention must be made of Susheela Kaushik of Delhi University, who brought her relentless drive and energy to the project, N.K. Nijhawan of the ICSSR who gave of his best, in terms of time and ideas, in hundreds of details, because he was convinced of the importance of such a study, and T.K. Sarojini, Joint Director in the Dept. of Women and Child Development who was the nodal person in the Ministry and let her office serve as a clearing house for information on the project.

There are many institutions that have given their strength and support to this study. Among them are the Indian Council for Social Science Research, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Lady Irwin College, University of Delhi, National Institute for Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD) and all the other Universities involved in this study. Their institutional support is gratefully acknowledged.

Also on record is my thanks to all the person hosting the planning sessions, the training Workshops and the Coding Workshops, among whom are Maithreyi Krishnaraj, Vasantha Ramkumar, Susheela Kaushik, M.M.A. Faridi, Ujwala Patil Hiremath, Rameshwari Varma and N.K. Nijhawan. Gratitude to the Project Directors, Research Associates and Investigators of all the 22 team is hereby recorded.

A large number of persons, including those appointed to help with maintaining the Convenor's office and with data analysis and documentation must be acknowledged. Apart from those on the Coordination Committee and the Advisory Panel, whose names are mentioned separately, I would like to thank the following: Deepa Das for her enthusiastic participation at the early stages of developing the questionnaire; Anil Kumar of the ICSSR, Data Archives, who was a pillar of support in the management of data; Alpana Sharma and Rekha Nautiyal who joined him later to assist with data coding; Devika Rani and later Malathi Venkataraman who helped in the early months with maintenance of files and accounts of the Convenor's office at Madras and particularly N. Lakshmi, whose consistent motivation and efficiency has helped to sustain the project office for over two years.

I am grateful also to Indira Seetharam who worked systematically at decoding the data and setting up the tables. I would like to record the help of Usha Suresh and Sujatha Rani in extracting the relevant data from the field reports. In the final phase, I was ably assisted by Malini Sood. Yeshwanti Balagopal, with competence, confidence and meticulousness also helped in the last phase, bringing the report to its final form.

Most of all, thanks to the girl child who spoke frankly about herself, trusting us to take action, so that she could be enabled to function in the future as a first class citizen in an egalitarian society.

- S. Anandalakshmy

Preface

It is with some satisfaction that I introduce this report of the nation-wide study on the **Girl Child and the Family** to policy makers, activists and academics. The study is an excellent example of cooperative endeavour, among the Dept. of Women and Child Development, Women's Studies Centres in the institutions of higher learning and the Indian Council of Social Science Research.

We are now well into the SAARC Decade of the Girl Child (1991-2000). The findings of this study will serve as a reminder of our unfinished tasks and as a source of ideas for programmes to be undertaken in the immediate future.

It was ambitious to undertake such a massive study, with 22 University Centres for Women's Studies collaborating . There were logistic problems and hurdles to smoothly coordinated work, in all its detail. The Centres where the research was conducted were far flung. Each University had its own rules, including a great deal of red tape in some cases. Nevertheless, the tenacity and motivation of the research teams helped to see it through, if only with some understandable delay.

Each research team sought to bring in local colour and idiom, making the report a tangible one, about real people, not just a collection of quantitative data.

For all the participants, the motivating force was their anger at the deprivation of rights and privileges suffered by the girl child and their conviction that the truth must be told now, loud and clear. This bold and committed approach has made the study reveal the many deplorable facets of the life of the girl child in India.

I trust that activists and scholars in the field will treat this study as the first step in a series of action plans to be undertaken for the girl child. It is hoped that the feedback from this study for national policy will also be treated with the seriousness it deserves. And most of all, it is expected that the girl child's future will be brighter and her life chances more equitable than in the past.

Convenor
Coordination Committee

GIRL CHILD AND THE FAMILY

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Chapter I

RATIONALE, METHODOLOGY AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Genesis of the National Study

This study on the girl child was planned by the Centres for Women's Studies in different Universities in India as a collaborative research-cum-action project in 1990, the Year of the Girl Child. The project was set up to generate comparative data on the girl child by adopting a common research design. Feasible points of intervention and appropriate action were expected to be the outcome.

From the sixties at the international level and from the seventies at the national level, gender disparity emerged as a major concern. In India, **poverty, class and caste** compound the problem of gender inequality and gender injustice. The girl child is most vulnerable to the insults of poverty and deprivation. Therefore the plans and strategies for women should be linked to the head-on attack on poverty and injustice and to the developmental goals of society as a whole — development of human potential, equality and justice. While there have been rapid social changes in the last few decades, these changes have not always included the rights of women and girl children as specific components. The girl child is discriminated against from the moment of conception: subservience to the male is her continuing destiny.

Development is by definition a future-oriented term. Its connotation has varied over time; the current critique of the term has led to its very rejection. Real development, it is now felt, should consider people rather than GNP or per capita income and not just humanity, as a global category, but human beings: men and women, boys and girls. Given our future orientation and modifiable levels of neglect, the focus should be on children. UNICEF in 1989 identified three broad areas of concern for the preservation, protection and development of the lives of children so as to ensure for them a life of dignity.

These were :

a) the creation of a suitable environment (material and social);

b) the reaching out of knowledge, information and skills for effective, sustained action for all children; and

c) the initiation of programmes for reducing social and economic disparities.

These priority areas are applicable to both girls and boys but as we know, girl children in our country need a special focus.

The Rights of Girl Children

Girl children are entitled to equal access to all the resources of society. This entitlement is frequently denied. Discrimination that begins at the girl's birth has a cumulative effect on inequality, producing despair and powerlessness. The beginning must be made with the girl child herself. Unless the girl internalises the concept and experience of equity, as an adult she may tolerate or even perpetuate gender disparity. At present the girl child is denied the very acquisition of an identity. The right to personhood is a primary right and must be extended to the girl child. Also, her rights to dignity, health and education are not visibly supported or articulated by family or society. There must be concerted action on this count.

Even the most imaginative of our Govts. and the most far reaching of our Five Year Plans have tended to marginalise women and girls, especially those living in poverty, not because we did not have the ideology, the conceptual framework or the jargon, but because we did not have the political will. Otherwise, it would have been unnecessary to begin a study on the Girl Child in the last decade of this century, four and a half decades after Independence.

Until recently, there has been no gender specificity in the data on IMR, immunization or access to health services. At best, literacy and school enrolment figures are disaggregated by gender. Otherwise children are treated as belonging to one category and not much is known about the girl children per se, except through a few micro-studies.

On the cultural processes within the family and community that generate gender stereotypes, only recently has some work begun in India. We do not have a clear grasp of how subordination is made acceptable and is accepted by girls. Apart from disparity in access to health and education, there are problems specific to girl children: persuasion to drop out of school, prostitution of minors, dedication as **devadasis**, sexual abuse, violence, chronic under-nutrition, early marriage, early and excessive child bearing, widowhood, desertion, unequal returns for labour and unrecognized work.

The State of the World's Children, published by UNICEF in 1989, had listed Seven Deadly Sins of Development, as it had been carried out in third world countries. Two of these, relevant for this study are:

a) development without women

b) development without the poor

To avoid these "deadly sins", our national plans should be addressed specifically to the category of families below the poverty line, especially women and girl children.

Strategies

The identification of causes and antecedents must be the first step. Secondly there must be an appreciation of the inherent capacity of communities to solve their own problems. The establishment and maintenance of a network of services, sustained by community support, is the third step. To establish the value of a girl child as a human person of vast potential needs an integrated approach. The categorical imperatives are a gender-balanced socialization at home and at school, the growth of appropriate government machinery for health and education infrastructure as well as mobilisation of the people as **actors** in the development process, not just as **recepients**, combined with the provision of water, access to fuel and enhanced employment opportunities for adults.

Role of the Universities

A data-base to bridge macro-policies with micro-level representation of reality was needed. The setting up of Women's Studies Centres by the U.G.C. all over the country offered an excellent opportunity for higher education to make itself relevant to the social issues of the day, foremost among which is that of gender equality and gender justice. In this context, it was considered that research could become a tool for social change.

Universities were expected to play a role to:

a) bring about awareness among students and teachers and the community on the plight of the girl child;

b) participate in the active seeking of solutions; and

c) assist in effective implementation through evaluation/monitoring programmes/schemes.

Universities can bring to bear a certain measure of objectivity while sustaining commitment to a better society. On this major principle, our study was founded.

The Origin of the Project

At a meeting of the UGC-supported Centres of Women's Studies organised by the Research Centre for Women's Studies, SNDT Women's University, at Bombay in 1989, it was unanimously decided to take up a collaborative research-cum-action project on the girl child.

Subsequently, the Research Centre for Women's Studies, SNDT and the Centres for Women's Studies, University of Delhi and University of Trivandrum convened a meeting at SNDT on Dec. 4, 1989 to draw up a preliminary research design with the assistance of experts. A Planning Workshop at Trivandrum was also mooted so that the academics could do the following :

a) finalise and adopt the research design, methodology and tools,
b) finalise the list of institutions that would participate in the project
c) decide on the choice of region/areas where the surveys will be done, and
d) draw up the time frame and budget.

This planning workshop was held from March 3 to 7, 1990 at Trivandrum. At that workshop the following areas were suggested as thrust areas for investigation: education and literacy; socialization; age at marriage; child labour; health/nutrition; child abuse, female foeticide and female infanticide; widowhood; desertion. It was decided that any other problem specific to a particular region may also be taken up. A Coordination Committee was nominated and set up.

Several formal and informal consultative meetings were held in Delhi in the next two months, as a result of which action and intervention in the problem areas related to the girl child were included as an integral part of the study. Twenty-two University Centres volunteered from among those who attended the workshop and shared the research interests. The States in which they are situated and the number of Centres in each state are as follows, alphabetically: Andhra Pradesh (4) Bihar (1) Delhi (1) Gujarat (2) Karnataka (3) Kerala (1) Madhya Pradesh (1) Maharastra (3) Orissa (1) Punjab (Chandigarh) (1) Rajasthan (1) Tamil Nadu (1) Uttar Pradesh (1) West Bengal (1).

Objectives of the Study

1) To generate data of comparable nature on some common parameters that will give an understanding of the situation of the girl child.
2) To identify the major problems relating to the status of the girl child and suggest alternate courses of action.
3) To start a series of programmes to help to remedy the shortcomings.
4) To assist the community and women in particular to pursue desirable alternatives by organising themselves.
5) To test the feminist methodology of participant Action Research in an empricial study.
6) To assess the status of girl children within the family in order to predict the position of women in the 21st Century.
7) To provide ways and means of ameliorating the conditions pertaining to the low status and subordination of girls, in order to provide equality and justice as enshrined in the Constitution.

It was decided that each centre would provide the texture of that region by examining folk songs and folk stories, proverbs and local beliefs, as well as undertake a small survey of contemporary popular literature in that language and region. This was planned so that the individual characteristics of each region or sub-culture would be included in the national study.

Training Workshops

A training workshop was considered necessary to orient the participating institutions to arrive at conceptual clarity and a shared understanding of the focus of the study, the parameters chosen, the methodology involved, the administration of the tools and the interpretation of data. The institutions concerned had varying levels of experience and competence and many were new to Women's Studies. The fear that a routine, conventional, unimaginative survey may not provide the insights into the problems researched was expressed and clearly articulated. Guidelines were therefore deemed necessary. Strategies were also to be devised for how families and communities could be taken into confidence. A fairly uniform format for presentation of data, it was felt, would be an added advantage.

It was decided to have two workshops for Directors of Women's Studies Centres: one workshop for the West and South to be conducted by the Research Centre for Women's Studies at SNDT, Bombay and the other workshop at Delhi University for the North and East, to be conducted by the Women's Studies Centre at Delhi University were planned.

Approximately 10 Centres were to be involved in each training workshop pooled on the basis of region. The participants of the workshop would include the Directors of the Centre and Research Associate/Field Supervisor. Five or six resource persons were invited to assist in the training at each of the centres. These workshops were attended by all members of the Coordination Committee.

Each participating centre was expected to identify specific thrusts (health/education/vocational training). Possibilities of collaboration with voluntary organisations were to be kept in mind, especially for mobilising women, organising women's camps, organising adolescent girls' camps, skill training programmes, creative activities and so on.

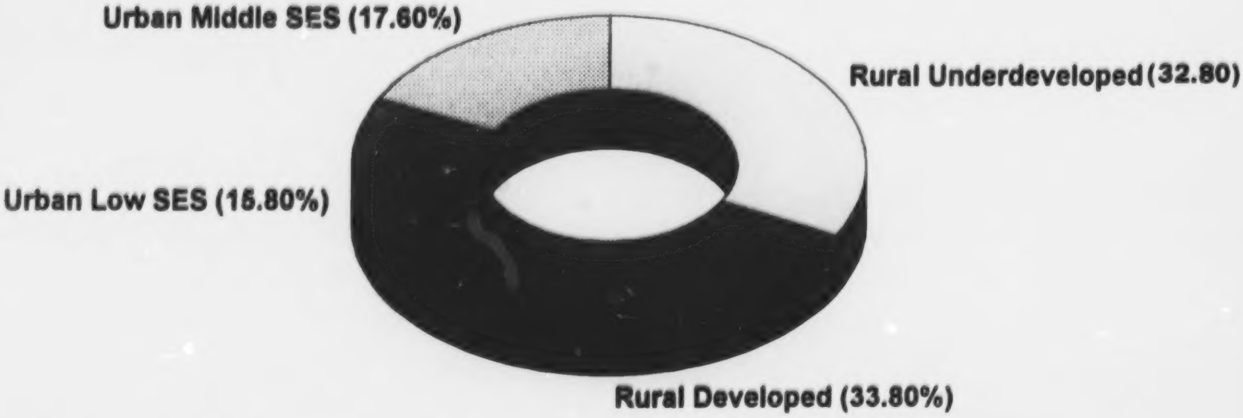
Thus each of the research teams would bring energy, originality and inviduality to their specific work, while contributing to the large picture and to the emergence of national data.

Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

Experts in Statistics and Research Methods from both the Indian Council for Social Science Research and Tata Institute of Social Sciences shared their expertise in this matter. The sample was planned as follows

The sampling design followed for this study was multistage stratified random sampling. The State in which the collaborating team was located automatically determined the area from which the sub-samples were taken. Since in this sense the States were self-selected, they were not technically a formal constituent of the random sampling design, although the hope that this would constitute a true national sample was retained. Since the qualifying factor was identifying a Women's Studies Centre (funded by the UGC), all the States were not covered and some regions were over-represented. The first stage of the sampling was the district and the second, the ward or village.

The research teams were advised to consult the Economic Index (1985) prepared by the Centre for Monitoring the Indian Economy. Bombay, in which the districts in each State were rank-ordered according to the criterion of level of development. The sample selected here was to consist of one district from the first quartile (25% at the bottom) and one district from the fourth quartile (25% at the top) of the districts as provided in the CMIE (1985).



PROPORTION OF TYPES OF AREA
In the Sample

Literacy level is a datum now available for each and every village and urban ward. This was therefore treated as a variable for the final level of sampling. The level of literacy was selected as the independent variable for the sub-sample. Two villages, one with high literacy and one with low literacy were selected from each of the districts. "High" and "Low" did not indicate absolute levels of literacy with reference to any norm — but were high or low within that specific district.

For the rural areas, the samples were taken from developed and less developed districts, varying on literacy. For the urban areas (which constituted 1/3 of the entire sample) Socio-economic Status was the criterion variable with both low SES and middle SES families, in approximately equal numbers. Towards this end, two wards were chosen: one ward having low SES residents and one with lower middle class residents.

Each of the collaborating centres thus took a sample of 4 villages and 2 urban wards - 100 households in each, making up a total of 600 households. Of these, two villages were from a district with low development and two, from a district with high development. In the urban areas, there were two groups : households from lower and middle levels. The total sample with percentages from each of the different subgroups is clearly depicted in Table I.1.

Table I.1

Constituents of the total sample

Literacy Level	Percent
Low Literacy village from District with low Devt.	17.6
Low literacy village from District with high Devt.	16.3
High literacy village from District with low Devt.	15.2
High literacy village from District with high Devt.	17.5
Urban Area - Low SES	15.8
Urban Area - Middle SES	17.7

In each sample, 100 girls between the age of 7 and 18 were to be selected for the study. The households from which they were taken were to be studied by a fairly detailed schedule. In addition, the mother or mother-surrogate of each girl was also to be interviewed. Each research team filled up 600 schedules on the Girl Child, and an equal number on their mothers and on the households. Thus 1800 questionnaires in all came from each collaborating centre. For the national study, there were 13,200 girls, their mothers and information on as many households. This information runs into 106 items on the Households, 300 items on the Girl Child and 240 items on the Mother.

Methods of Research

Following the training workshops and the collective thinking on appropriate methodology, a manual on methodology was published by the Research Centre for Women's Studies, SNDT Women's University. It was also decided that the entry point of the research teams into the villages could be in the form of an orientation to health (camps for immunisation, family planning, health check up) or literacy (numeracy, literacy, legal literacy, skill development).

It was further decided that the girl and her mother would be interviewed separately. The objective fact of the girl's subordination in the family (or otherwise) and the subjective experience of her powerlessness (or control) were both to be studied. Raising the level of awareness of girls and women about the existing governmental schemes and programmes for their amelioration was one major objective. Empowering the girl to have some control over her own choices, especially those concerning her education and self-expression, was another important objective.

The questionnaires (Household Schedule, Girl Child Schedule and Mother Schedule) finalised by a centrally constituted team of experts, were sent to all the participating centres for translation and use. When the Indian Association for Women's Studies met for the Biennial Conference at Jadavpur University in Feb. 1991, many of the Project Directors and research staff attended it. Full use was made of their presence at the Conference and another workshop on methodology was organised in Calcutta. Those few Project Directors who could not attend (from four centres) were informed of all procedures through detailed correspondence.

Coding

A number of questions in these schedules were open-ended. It is to take note of the open ended questions and varied response to them that a Coding System has been devised. The actual coding system can be developed only when the collection of some data has been completed. The responses from a section of the sample are taken as true indicators of the responses of the entire sample. For some kinds of questions (castes, languages, districts) the coding system has a code for each name mentioned. For most of the other questions, the thrust of the exercise was to develop a classification system for the open ended responses.

Two Coding Training Workshops were held, one in Mysore in April '91 and the other in Gulbarga in May '91. Half of the total number of project staff attended each of the Workshops. For the three teams who were not able to attend either Workshop, a third one was organised in New Delhi in July '91. Thus all twenty two research teams participated in the Coding Workshops and were equipped to prepare the data for computer analysis.

The Coordinating Committee had the task of monitoring the study at all the Centres, visiting any centre which had a problem, and generally keeping the communication system active. The Coordinating Committee also met several times to develop plans for Data Analysis and to monitor the progress of the collaborating teams.

Data Management

The management of data in this project has been a major responsibility of the Indian Council for Social Science Research. From the early phase of development of questionnaires and deciding upon the sampling frame, to the stage of data analysis (with the development of codes and code books, data entry, data cleaning and consistency checks as intermediate stages) we have had the advice and guidance of the ICSSR.

Substantive Issues

Apart from a detailed Household Schedule, which solicits a vast quantum of information on several relevant variables, the questionnaire intended for the Girl Child seeks information on major aspects of her existence — schooling, level or class attended, reasons for discontinuation, facilities at the school and those availed by her, her health, history or illness, kind of treatment and medical attention, reasons for the same, immunisations, food patterns and special diet, whether food taken to school and so on; myriad facts on socialization which can be carefully constructed as a map of the girl child's experience. And on every aspect, whether there was discrimination on the basis of gender formed an integral query. The work and labour status of the girl, along with conditions of work and wages and the economic contribution made by her is a constituent part of the study. We thus expect to have a clear picture of a day in the life of the girl child from more than a hundred situations, virtually mini-ethnographies of several sub-cultures.

Not only are the facts noted, but the reason behind every practice, including menarche rituals and menstruation taboos, are elicited. And what is more the proximal setting of the particular household, as well as the eco-niche in which the household is situated, provide the space against which the life of the girl can be studied and assessed. The open ended questions have been anchored by an exhaustive coding system, so that no information gathered is lost. In fact, the coverage of detail is rather ambitious and there will be a great deal of secondary data for other researchers in gender issues in future years.

This project is unique in the following features :

1) It is a collaborative endeavour between the Dept. of Women & Child Development, Govt. of India and the higher educational system.
2) It utilises the UGC infrastructure of Women's Studies Centres to assemble a team of collaborating researchers around the country. Thus a large study has been completed cost-effectively.
3) It is more than a status report on the Girl Child. Action and Intervention programmes tuned to the needs of each situation are included.

4) Using research methods and instruments developed by the entire team of participating academics, this study combines the advantages of micro-research and macro-research — for each team, the study is detailed, but when summed up over 22 teams, there is a large sample.
5) It demonstrates the catalytic role of the educational institutions in community work, particularly in the issues regarding girl children. There is a vast potential for utilizing the institutional framework of the Universities for outreach of development programmes.

These five aspects make the project an exceptional instance of cooperation in research and the genesis of national policy in the cause of the girl child.

Chapter II

PROFILE OF THE HOUSEHOLD

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Chapter II

PROFILE OF THE HOUSEHOLD

Demographic Profile

The demographic profile of the household in which the girl child is located can be drawn from several kinds of data about the families : religion, socio-economic status, caste, migration and so on.

Religious Affiliation

The first question was about the religious affiliation of the family.

Table II.1

Religious Affiliation of Families in the Sample

Religion	Percent	Religion	Percent
Hindu	85 . 5	Buddhist	1 . 2
Muslim	7 . 3	Jain	0 . 2
Christian	2 . 5	Others	0 . 6
Sikh	2 . 6		

The religious affiliation of the sample with the percentage in each group is given in Table II.1. The large majority were Hindus (85 . 5%) and Muslims constituted the largest minority with 7 . 3%.

Caste Distribution

The selection criterion was to have adequate representation of those lowest in privilege and status.

In India, the SC comprise about 15% and ST about 7 . 5% of the population as a whole. A particular effort was made in this study to include at least the same proportion of the two groups in the sample. It is well known that even now, in spite of reverse discrimination for four decades, persons who belong to the SC/ST families, are on the lowest rung of the hierarchy. Girl children from these families, it was anticipated would have least access to privileges. Table II.2 gives us a clear picture of the proportion of families from the Scheduled Castes and Tribes.

Table II.2

Caste Distribution in the Sample (I)

Castes	Percent	Castes	Percent
Scheduled Castes	20.3	Other Hindu Castes	62.1
Scheduled Tribes	5.7	Other Religious Groups	11.8

The research teams did in fact succeed in getting sufficient numbers of SC families. However, the ST representation is a little short and one can hazard a guess about the socio-geographical reasons for the same (i.e. in the selected rural districts or urban wards, the representation of Scheduled Tribes was relatively lower than in the whole population).

The categorization of the total sample by caste is as follows. (Table II.3)

Table II.3

Caste Distribution in the Sample (II)

Castes	Percent	Castes	Percent
Brahmin	7.6	Scheduled Castes	20.3
Other Forward Castes	27.8	Scheduled Tribes	5.7
Backward Castes	31.9	Others	6.6

Brahmin and other Forward Castes together comprise one third of the sample, Backward Castes a little less than 1/3 and Scheduled Castes 20%. Those in the `other' category were from religious faiths other than Hindu.

Language Distribution

Mother Tongue

The distribution of the mother tongue of the girl children in the sample reveals a wide range of 12 official languages and 6 dialects, as presented in Table II.4

There were no sub-samples from the North-East or from Kashmir and hence Assamese, Kashmiri or Urdu were not found to be mother tongues in the sample. The unevenness of the representation from different Indian States (which in turn constitute linguistic regions) can be seen. There were three sub-samples from Andhra Pradesh and three from Maharashtra, which accounts for the relatively higher proportions of Telugu and Marathi speaking families. Hindi would have been used in some urban parts all over the country and in U.P., Delhi and M.P. In addition to the official languages (formally recognised), we have people identifying their mother tongue as Bhojpuri, Marwadi, Magahi or Tulu. It is apparent that the languages spoken by Indians far exceed the number of official languages. The non-official languages include those spoken by the indigenous tribes as well as dialects of the official languages and languages which have not been given official status because they do not have a separate script.

Table II.4

Mother Tongue of the Girl Child

Languages	Percentage of Sample	Languages	Percentage of Sample
Bengali	4.5	Sindhi	4.3
English	0.1	Tamil	4.7
Gujarati	5.3	Telugu	15.9
Hindi	11.6	Bhojpuri	2.8
Kannada	9.5	Marwadi	3.5
Malayalam	4.7	Rajasthani	0.1
Marathi	13.3	Magahi	3.0
Oriya	3.9	Tulu	1.1
Punjabi	3.8	Garhwali	1.7

Languages spoken at home

Most non-Indians encountering Indians for the first time comment on the tendency for Indians to be at least bilingual. However, bilingualism is found more commonly in urban areas and among migrants. Here two-thirds of the total sample was rural and most families were at the lower SES levels; monolingualism was therefore dominant.

Table II.5

Languages spoken at home

Languages spoken	Percent
Mother tongue only	87.6
Mother tongue and one other language	11.0

In the sample, 87.6% speak only their mother tongue at home. In this sample, which was drawn largely from rural areas or deprived urban wards, 11% of the families were bilingual at home (Table II.5).

Migration of the Family/Members of the Family

Migration is often the choiceless route to a livelihood for low skill poverty groups and an option for highly qualified persons (migration being a phenomenon with two distinct types of persons, responding to what sociologists refer to as the push and the pull factors respectively). Given that our sample is largely from the rural areas (two thirds of the entire sample), it is understandable that almost 80% are stable in their place of origin, while 20% have come from elsewhere (Table II.6). Most of the migrants in the sample were urban residents.

Table II.6

Source of Migration

Migration	Percent
From village	12 . 1
From town	4 . 3
From city	3 . 0
Inapplicable - (not migrated)	79 . 8

Where does one belong? This an easy question to ask and a difficult one to answer. There is great deal of movement from one part of the country to another especially from rural to urban areas. Except for farm-owning cultivators who are sedentary because of owning and cultivating land, others move for economic reasons. Generally migration *per se* in not an indication of social status, since both pull and push factors operate i.e.. one moves for a better job and amenities or one is pushed out by poverty or drought.

Migration tends to take a rural-to-urban or urban-to-urban direction. There is also a tendency for migration from small towns to large cities. In this sample, there are 12% migrants from rural areas, compared to 7 . 3% from urban areas (possibly to other urban areas), almost all in search of employment.

Of the 20% of the sample who have migrated from elsewhere, the largest number had done so more than 20 years earlier (Table II.7).

The rest came more or less in an even flow over a 20 year period - reflecting a gradual movement of people rather than an upheaval or exodus.

It was considered important to study the pattern of migration i.e. whether they moved singly or in families and so on.

Table II.7

When the Families Migrated

Period	Percent
1-5 years ago	3.3
5-10 Years ago	3.6
10-15 years ago	3.3
15-20 year ago	2.9
More than 20 years ago	6.2
Inapplicable - not migrated	79.9

Quite often whole families move together in search of livelihood especially to the cities and towns and 6.5% of our sample fell into that category. About the same number have the male head of the family moving first and the rest of the family following later on (Table II.8).

Table II.8

Family Members Migrating First

Family members	Percent
Grandfather	2.2
Father	6.6
Both parents	2.8
Entire family	6.5
Inapplicable	79.9

For many of the families selected, migration probably meant the possibility of being on the margin of subsistence. For them there was no question of large savings or supporting others in the family they left behind. When questioned, it was found that sending money to the family is a practice of only 1.7% of the sample.

In 92% of the families, no member was working out of his village/town. The small number of out-migrants (7.2%) were probably from the rural families in the sample, following the demographic trends associated with urban development. The question that had been formulated was "Who are the family members working elsewhere?" and since it specifically concerned those working, children who had gone for studies did not enter this category.

Main Household Occupation

The response to the question about main household occupation revealed some interesting facts. Almost 31% of the sample of 12,000 families had no specific household occupation. They would have constituted the people in non-traditional occupations, which includes services and professions. Agriculture constituted the largest main occupation in the sample - totalling small land owners (29%) and agricultural labourers (8 . 5%). The non-agricultural manual wage workers made up 7% of the group. Table II.9 shows the details.

Table II.9

Main Household Occupation

Household Occupation	Percent
Piece-rate worker	2 . 8
Business	5 . 9
Petty Business	5 . 3
Agriculture	29 . 2
Artisan/Craftman	3 . 6
Agricultural labour	8 . 5
Manual wage worker (non-agricultural)	7 . 1
No specific household occupation	30 . 8
Sweeper/Barber	1 . 6
Any other	3 . 8

It was decided to ascertain the main household occupation i.e. the traditional occupation of the family which was to be differentiated from salaried jobs in the public or private sector or defence. The question was intended to tap traditional family occupations, characteristic of most rural families. It was also recognized that unskilled labour would move to any available work and hence would not qualify in the category of main household occupation. The proportion of manual wage workers (7 . 1%), artisans (3 . 6%) agricultural labour (8 . 5%) and no specific household occupation (30 . 8%) conveys the information that the sample is drawn from the bottom of the status hierarchy and therefore is representative of the families in poverty or subsistence levels identified in the objectives of the study.

Subsidiary Occupations

Since agricultural activities are bound to the seasons, they have peaks and troughs in the involvement level of the family round the year. During the lean season, families might be expected to have a subsidiary occupation. It is the access to a subsidiary occupation that often helps families engaged in agriculture to sustain themselves through difficult times.

Table II.10

Subsidiary Household Occupation

Household Occupation	Percent
Piece-rate worker	2.4
Business	2.2
Petty Business	3.6
Agricultural	5.5
Animal Husbandry	3.0
Artisan/Craftsman	1.0
Agricultural labour	5.3
Manual wage worker (non-agricultural)	3.4
No subsidiary occupation	69.9
Any other	2.7

The question of subsidiary household occupation was responded to negatively by almost 70% of the total number of households. Agriculture is mentioned as subsidiary household occupation by almost 11% of the households involved in food preservation, food processing and post-harvest conservation tasks. At marginal and subsistence levels, petty business, craft work and agricultural labour may become overlapping categories; here the question asked was about the most important subsidiary occupation taken up by the household (Table II.10).

Economic Status: Ownership of Assets

Assessment of economic status cannot always be done by asking for an income statement; many persons are unwilling to state it openly, or unable to clearly assess their income, when much of it may not be in cash.

Field work experience has shown that income as a response variable, can be unreliable. It was decided therefore to study the assets : house, land, cattle and movable assets in addition to income.

Ownership of House and Non-agricultural Land

The first of these - house and non-agricultural land revealed that only 7.8% did not have their own houses. The rest owned their own dwellings, however modest. About one third of the persons owned a pucca house (brick and mortar with a permanent roof) and about 36% owned a kutcha house (mud and thatch, with makeshift flooring). The combination of the two is more difficult to define and has many variations within it, built with more or less permanent material (Table II.11).

Table II.11

Ownership of House and Non-agricultural Land

Houses	Percent
No house/No agricultural land	7.8
Kutcha house only	32.3
Pucca house	36.4
Both kutcha and pucca	11.3
House and house plot	10.0

Ownership of Agricultural Land

More than half (56%) of the householders responding to the questionnaire owned no agricultural land (Table II.12). Since two-thirds of the sample was rural and one-third was urban, it can be assumed that the urban householder owned no agricultural land. That would still make about one-third of the rural families landless. Only 7.5% of the entire sample of 12,000 families own over five acres of land.

Table II.12

Ownership of Agricultural Land

Land	Percent	Land	Percent
No land	56.0	5 - 10 acres	4.3
Some Land/no details	16.2	10 - 15 acres	1.8
Less than 1 acre	5.1	15 - 20 acres	1.0
1 - 5 acres	14.4	20 - acres +	1.2

About 16% could give no detail how much land they owned; which could mean that they were marginal landholders, and could be clubbed with those owning less than one acre. A land holding of 1-5 acres is held by 14.4% of the sample and this is the category with the largest number of responses. This table provides a clear profile of the sample. Even the 44% that own farm land had, for the large part, only modest land holdings.

Ownership of Livestock, Poultry or Fish

Cattle and other farm animals are assets, generally held by farmers, as land and livestock have a symbiotic relationship.

Table II.13

Ownership of Cattle and Other Animals/Birds

Animals	Percent
No cattle/animals/poultry/fish	63.0
Milch cattle	24.3
Non-milch cattle/camels	2.5
Milch cattle and non-milch cattle/camels	6.4
Pigs/sheep/goats/poultry/fish	1.7
Milch/non-milch cattle and other animals/poultry/fish	2.0

Table II.13 shows that a clear 63% of the families own no animals, which are known to be assets that could add to economic and health status. Twenty four percent of the householders own only milch cattle — and 6.4% own milch cattle and bulls. Other animals are owned only by a relatively small percentage of families in this sample.

Ownership of Agricultural or other Implements

Table 14 follows closely on the previous one. Being largely owners of very small plots of agricultural land or being landless, almost 75% own no implements.

Table II.14

Ownership of Agricultural and other Implements

Implements	Percent
No implements at all	74.3
Some implements/no details	7.3
Traditional implements alone	11.0
Low technical implements (excluding tractor or pump set)	3.8
Low technical implements and traditional implements	1.7
Tractor/pump set alone	1.0

Only 1% own tractor/pumpset and 5.5% own low technical implements. The category of "some implements, no details" could probably be clubbed with traditional implements. Thus, treating agricultural and other implements as assets, these data provide an authentic picture of the sample, which is of people living on the margin of subsistence.

Ownership of Conveyance

Cities are burgeoning with motorised vehicles, with two wheelers having virtually a "population explosion". A little less than half the total sample of respondents owned some vehicle (Table II.15).

Table II.15

Ownership of Conveyance

Conveyance	Percent
No Conveyance at all	54.2
Animal/Animal driven carts only	1.8
Cycle/cycle rickshaw	32.5
Motor cycle/scooter/moped	10.4
Motor car/jeep	1.1

Bicycles were owned by 31% and motorised two wheelers by about 10% of the families. It is only 1% of the sample that owned a car or jeep, the same number that own tractor or pumpset. In a way this puts the car owner in the 99th percentile of this sample - probably a fair estimate of his position in the general population too.

Ownership of Electronic Goods (Audio-visual Gadgets)

Electronic goods are also assets, requiring approximately the same levels of capital investment as the other assets. Including these as an indicator of SES was considered appropriate. The big push of consumer durables, especially of the electronic kind, seems to have paid off, with even families in rural and urban areas living on a marginal income, investing in them.

While about 5% of the householders invest in low-tech farming implements, more than 60% have access to radio, TV, or VCR. Altogether more than 30% of the families own TVs and combinations of TV with other gadgets. Considering the socioeconomic status as defined by the ownership of other assets, 30% to be owing TV seems a moderately high proportion. However, seen in the context of Doordarshan's public interest programmes aimed at the under-privileged, the outreach of TV must be considered to be highly inadequate (Table II.16).

Table II.16

Ownership of Audio-visual Gadgets

Gadgets	Percent
No gadgets	37.3
Radio/Transistor only	27.0
Tape recorder / two-in-one / record player only	5.2
T.V. with or without radio/transistor	16.2
T.V. and tape recorder/two-in-one with or without transistor/radio	12.2
V.C.P. /V.C.R. and T.V. with or without other gadgets	2.2

Ownership of Household Appliances/Utensils

Another asset of the family is the quantum of the household gadgets owned. This category is important for several reasons, including their being considered as necessary for inclusion in the daughter's dowry. Also being capital goods which are moveable, they may be pawned or sold when there is need of cash and in that sense, they are liquid assets. More than half the householders could name no household gadgets that they owned (Table II.17).

Table II.17

Ownership of Household Appliances/Utensils

Household Appliances/Utensils	percent
No appliances at all	51.1
Sewing machine only	1.7
Fan only	9.1
Both fan and sewing machine	2.8
Refrigerator & Mixer-grinder with or without sewing machine/fan	3.6
Brass/Copper vessels only	9.0
Silver vessels with or without copper vessels	4.5
Brass/Copper vessels with any other gadget	2.2
Silver vessels (stainless steel) with any other gadgets	3.8
N.A.	4.4

Brass and copper vessels were mentioned by 9%. "Silver" here refers to stainless steel, often referred to as "ever silver". About 9% had a fan, another 2.8% had a fan and sewing machine. Altogether the picture is of somewhat sparsely equipped households.

Household Debt

If people are not willing to state their income, as they are generally not, it was felt that asking them about their indebtedness would be another way of getting at economic status. However, the fact that almost two-thirds of the householders mention "no debt", made one feel that the hesitation concerning talking about one's income could apply to indebtedness too.

Table II.18

Indebtedness Position of the Household

Indebtedness	Percent	Indebtedness	Percent
No debt	64.6	Rs. 5001 -10000	6.8
Upto 500	3.5	Rs. 10001- 25000	4.0
Rs. 501 - 1000	3.3	More than Rs. 25000	2.1
Rs. 1001 - 3000	7.4	N.A.	1.7
Rs. 3001 - 5000	6.6		

But assuming that we have a true picture, we find that an amount of indebtedness ranging from Rs.1000 to Rs.10000/- is mentioned by 21% of the sample. About 6% have a debt of less than Rs.1000 and about 6% more than Rs.10000/- (Table II.18).

Government Programmes : Outreach and Benefit

One of the purposes of this study was to find out if the Government Programmes intended for the needy reached them and if those who benefitted saw themselves as beneficiaries. In this context, it must be noticed that one-third of the households stated that they had no benefit (Table II.19).

Table II.19

Households benefitted by Govt. Programmes

Benefit to members of family	Percent
None benefitted	33.5
All benefitted	46.2
Only men benefitted	1.8
Only girls benefitted	2.4
Both boys/girls benefitted	7.3
Women/children benefitted	5.7

About 46% say that some benefit reached all categories, men and women, boys and girls. Doubtless the programmes for boys and girls (which 7% claim reaches them) must be local Govt. run schools and the programme for women and children may have been the ICDS, MCH or DWCRA.

Employment or Income Generation Programmes

The official statements on income generation and poverty alleviation programmes may lead one to believe that they have a far greater outreach than these figures tell. (Table II.20)

Table II.20

Benefit from Employment /Income Oriented Programmes (IRDP, NREP, TRYSEM, BGS, DWCRA, JRY)

Programmes (Benefit)	Percent
Not benefitted from any such programme	60.5
Benefitted from such programmes	17.2
Inapplicable - no such programme in this area	19.6
D.K.	1.1
N.A.	1.6

More than 60% of respondents were categorical in the statement that they had not benefitted from any such programme; and about 20% said that their area had no such programme. Thus a clear 80% of the population is beyond the pale of employment and income generation schemes, or is at least unaware that such schemes are available.

Health - Oriented Programmes

About 35% of the people report that they are aware of the Health-Oriented programmes and consider themselves as beneficiaries of these (Table II.21).

Table II.21

Health Oriented Programmes (Malaria, Leprosy eradication, Family Planning, Pre-natal/Post-natal care, etc.).

Health Oriented Programmes	Percent
Not benefitted from any programmes	49.9
Benefitted from such programmes	35.2
Inapplicable - no such programmes	14.8

Half of the entire sample say that they have received no benefit from any health programme, and about 12% say that no such programme was available. Since this category of programmes includes family planning as well as prenatal and post-natal care, this table alone stands as a comment on the inadequate extent and outreach of health programmes.

Children-Oriented Programmes

Children-oriented programmes (ICDS, Balwadi, Immunisation etc.) rate very similarly to health-oriented programmes in terms of the proportions of positive and negative response (Table II.22).

Table II. 22

Benefit from Children-Oriented Programmes (ICDS, Balwadi, Mid-day Meal, Vaccinations/Immunisation etc).

Benefit (children - oriented programmes)	Percent
Not benefitted from any such programmes	48 . 7
Benefitted from such programmes	36 . 2
Inapplicable	14 . 9

Even the coverage seems non-existent in 15% of the sampled areas. A serious effort at mapping the services for children must be made soon so that distant pockets do not remain unreached.

Educational Programmes

When examining the next table (Table II.23) on Educational Programmes, we find 37% claiming not to have benefitted at all. This is a surprisingly large number considering the high enrolment figures for Primary School usually found in official documents.

Table II.23

Benefit from Educational Programmes (NFE, Adult Education, School, School-oriented)

Educational Programmes	Percent
Not benefitted from any programmes	37 . 3
Benefitted from programmes	47 . 9
Inapplicable	12 . 3

However when we consider the number of girl children in this sample who have never attended school and the number who have dropped out, this figure's authenticity is supported.

Housing Programmes

Regarding housing, almost 90% do not benefit from Government programmes. Either housing programmes are not available or they are not able to avail of existing programmes because of conditions attached to the scheme and the constraints.

Table II.24

Benefit from Housing Programmes (Indira Awas Yojana, Low-Income Housing, Housing Plots)

Housing Programmes	Percent
Not benefitted from any such programme	69 . 9
Benefitted	8 . 7
Inapplicable	18 . 7

One can hazard a guess that the 8 . 7% householders who say that they did benefit had got either a loan or a plot allotted, and only rarely, housing itself (Table II.24).

Other Welfare Programmes

When one clubs the residual welfare schemes (after health, education, income generation and housing have been considered separately) it does make something of an assortment (Table II . 25).

Table II.25

Benefit from Welfare Programmes (Drainage, Hand-pumps, Old Age pensions, Public Toilets, Smokeless Chulahs, Bio-gas)

Welfare Programmes	Percent
Not benefitted	35 . 9
Benefitted	49 . 5
Inapplicable	11 . 5

Nevertheless, the purpose was to see if even one programme undertaken by the Govt. for the well-being of the people had reached every family. Almost 36% give the "not benefited" response. Not done, or not seen to be done? This needs further study, not only for welfare programmes but for all the earlier ones discussed here.. The contrast between the definition of benefit with the definition of "right" might well explain the finding that a miniscule proportion of the poor "benefit". They might consider schooling a right and not an educational programme intended for their "benefit".

Impact of Development Schemes on Income

The schemes that offer support of some kind (loans, technical advice, infrastructure) should ideally increase the productivity of the workers and ultimately their income.

Table II. 26

Impact of Development Schemes on Income

Impact on Income	Percent of Workers
No impact	59.9
Improved to some extent	17.8
Improved to a great extent	3.3

This question was intended to check out the people's perceptions. Those who find a great deal of improvement in income, thanks to developmental programmes constitute only 3% of the sample and those who improve "to some extent" were about 18%. About 60% state that there was no impact on their income of any developmental scheme (Table II.26).

Impact of Development Schemes on Health

Health-oriented programmes should normally affect health directly; indirectly health will be positively affected by any scheme that improves income, access to resources and a sense of well being.

Table II. 27

Impact of Development Schemes on Health

Impact on Health	Percent
No impact	41.0
Improved to some extent	38.6
Improved to a great extent	2.8

When one has to assess whether the programmes on health had any impact on one's health, one hesitates to give a straight answer. This question is not an easy one to answer and may be seen as approximate rather than exact.

Impact of Development Schemes on Education

People may not perceive attendance in the locally run Govt. school as "impact on education". They might well assess impact on the basis of whether the children have acquired literacy, numeracy and other abilities and skills.

Table II. 28

Impact of Development Schemes on Education

Impact on Education	Percent
No impact	33.4
Improved to some extent	45.5
Improved to a great extent	3.5

Nevertheless since about 46% mention improvement to some extent - they must have considered the school system for their children as a corollary of the development schemes and the fact of their children attending school as benefits of the development scheme in education (Table II.28).

Adverse Impact of Development Schemes

'Development' has in current usage become a word loaded with the burden and fallout of development programmes. Distancing, mystification, bureaucratic control and the new power of expertise goes with the development package. So, it was decided to ask people if there was in their view, an adverse impact of Government Schemes.

Table II. 29

Adverse Impact of Development Schemes

Impact of Devt. Schemes	Percent
Problems with implementation/functioning	15.6
Corrupt practices	5.1
Cumbersome procedures	2.1
Inapplicable	52.6
Don't know/Can't say	10.3
N.A.	11.5

Almost 75% could not respond to this query, while 15.6% felt that the implementation of Schemes had problems, 5% mentioned the corruption of officials and 2% complained about the cumbersome procedures in getting grants sanctioned etc (Table II.29).

Family Activities

We move now to some of the family activities that may be components of the quality of life for its members.

Table II. 30

Frequency of Family Outings

Family Outings	Percent	Family Outings	Percent
No - never	10.9	Once a fortnight	1.1
Yes - only occasionally	47.3	Once a month	8.6
Frequently	9.4	Once in six months	9.2
Once a week	5.2	Once a year	8.0

One of the common observations made when one visits a village is that there is not that much to do outside the home: no place to go to, for most children, and no one to visit except one's cousins or friends in the neighbourhood. In this context, even visiting relatives or going on an outing with the family becomes a rare event. There are 10.9% families who never go for an outing and 5.2% who do so once a week. For almost half the families, an outing is an occasional event (Table II.30).

Some girls are "grown in seclusion" like greenhouse plants (14% or so) in this sample! (Table II.31). Outings generally seem to exclude the girls or "only occasionally", to include them.

Table II. 31

Girls included in Outings

Girls in outings	Percent	Girls in outings	Percent
No - never	13.8	Once a fortnight	8.3
Yes - only occasionally	46.8	Once in six months	9.9
Frequently	8.3	Once a year	8.1
Once a week	3.3	N.A.	1.3

A village mela, a temple festival or a family wedding which whole families and their girl children celebrate or participate in may not happen more than two or three times a year for most families.

Housing

1. Type of Housing

A fairly reliable indicator of socio-economic status is the kind of housing the family enjoys. In most parts of the country, the Kutcha-Pucca dichotomy helps (Kutcha : made of mud and thatch and Pucca : built with fairly permanent materials). However, different parts of the same house could be stable or temporary - and therefore a combination of the two is also an alternative.

Table II . 32

Type of House (in terms of Construction)

Type of House	Percent
Kutcha	32 . 0
Pucca (brick, cement etc)	46 . 3
Combination	16 . 9
Jhopri/hut	4 . 7
N.A.	0 . 1

The label 'combination' does not give an idea of how much of it is "Pucca" or "Kutcha". The families in this sample, who live in housing that has to be constantly renewed and often cannot withstand storm or wind, constitute about one third of the total. About 5% have huts which are shacks, improvised out of waste materials (Table II.32).

The kind of house most people have is so minimal that it is owned rather than rented. More than 80% own their homes while about 16% live in rented accommodation. The latter are likely to be families in the urban areas.

2. Rent Paid

The next table presents a clear indicator of the socio-economic status of the entire sample.

The fact that more than 80% of the people own their homes (be they small huts or hovels) has already been established. Of the rest, 4 . 3% are paying over Rs.1000 p.m. as rent. Surely, they must be from the urban samples, specifically the subsection of the middle class. About 10% (half of all the rent payers) pay less than Rs.200/-

p.m. Given the much higher rent that the average middle class urban resident is likely to be paying, the delineation of the socio-economic standard of this sample is unambiguous (Table II. 33).

Table II.33

Rent paid for House (p.m.)

Rent in Rupees	Percent families
Inapplicable	80.2
Less than 50	3.7
51 - 100	3.1
101 - 200	3.5
201 - 500	0.7
501 - 1000	0.8
1001 and above	4.3

3. Size of the Home

Since most families own their own homes, the size of the home specifically the number of rooms was considered a salient variable for socio-economic status.

Our findings reveal that less than 10% of the sample have more than five rooms in the house, and 11% of the total number of households have four rooms (Table II. 34).

Table II.34

Number of Rooms in Dwelling

Number of Rooms	Percent families
One	26.0
Two	33.9
Three	18.9
Four	11.2
Five	4.5
Six +	5.0

Families which have three rooms constitute about 19%. One third of the total sample live in a two-room house and 26% in only one room. Poverty conditions are again reflected in the majority of the homes mentioned here. It must be remembered that even the term "room" may be seen to be defining a relatively small space (64 or 80 sq.ft.) though this is bound to vary.

4. Amenities

Is there a separate space for cooking? Do they have some open space around the house? How is the system functioning? These were some of the questions we asked. We found that about 2/3 of all houses have a separate space for cooking and some open space attached to the house. About 35% have waste water stagnating near the house, while abo. 44% have a drainage system. 'Minimal' would be an apt term to describe their amenities at home.

5. Availability of Drinking Water

Despite a mission established at the national level for drinking water some years ago, the availability of water is still a problem.

Table II.35

Source of Drinking Water within House

Drinking Water within House	Percent
Tap	24.5
Handpump	4.7
Tubewell	4.8
Inapplicable (no source within house)	64.5

Drinking water is a scarcity; access to drinking water in or near the house is a "privilege" that at best, only one third of the sample has. Those that have tap water constitute only a quarter of the whole. Wells, hand pumps and tube wells are available to about 10%.

Later in this analysis, the same data will be seen to reflect on the way the girl child spends her time. Invariably in all families, it is the women and girls of the family who fetch drinking water. Thus a large majority of girls in the sample occupy a part of their time every day in fetching drinking water.

In examining the source of drinking water, we find that the most common source of drinking water outside the home is a tap. The question does not cover the duration in hours of this facility and given the country-wide water scarcity or the rather unplanned water management, the tap water facility must be available only for a few hours per day.

However, 18% of the families use a hand pump and 16% use water from the well for drinking purposes.

How far does one have to go for water?

Table II. 36

Source of Drinking Water outside the House.

Outside the House	Percent
Tap	29 . 6
Hand pump	18 . 1
Well	15 . 9
Tube well	3 . 0
Pond/Spring	1 . 0
Inapplicable (water-source inside the home)	30 . 1
Water tanker	0 . 5

For about a third of the households, the drinking water source is in the house. It is the remaining 65% to whom this question was specifically addressed. For almost half of all the families, water is available just outside the house (21%) or in the neighbourhood for 25% (Table II. 36).

Table II. 37

Distance of Drinking Water outside the House.

Distance	Percent
Just outside the house	21 . 2
In the neighbourhood	25 . 3
Within village	16 . 3
Outside village (within 2 kms)	2 . 1
Inapplicable (source within house)	34 . 5

Almost all families can find drinking water within their own villages, although 2 . 1% have to go outside the village for a distance of about 2 kms.

Slaking the family's thirst is both the birthright and the duty of the women and girls. It is common knowledge that collecting water is one of the gender-related tasks.

We see in Table II. 38 that girls and women as a category of persons collecting water constitute 30% (in addition girls only constitute 4 . 2% and women only, 9 . 3%).

There are other combinations of course, including men and boys (1 . 2%). Boys are also roped in to help with domestic tasks (including fetching water), but the provision of life sustaining water is dependent almost wholly upon the labour of the female members of the family.

Table II.38

Person in the Family Collecting Water

Persons in the Family	Percent
Girls only	4 . 2
Women only	9 . 3
Girls and women	30 . 1
Girls and boys	1 . 8
Girls, boys, and women	6 . 9
Men and boys	1 . 2
Any or all members	11 . 4
Inapplicable - (source within house)	33 . 6

6. Electricity

The availability of electricity in the village or slum area indicates the level of development of the area and its availability in the home, a definite input into the quality of life of the family. In this sample, 94 . 5% of the families stated that their village or locality had electricity.

Table II.39

Extent of Electricity in the House

Electricity	Percent of Families
No	29 . 0
Yes - only 1 point	10 . 8
Yes - less than 5 points	33 . 7
Yes - more than 5 points	20 . 6
Inapplicable	6 . 0

However, as can be seen in the table, 29% of the households did not have electricity in their homes. Of those who do, there was quite a variation in the number of points. As socio-economic status goes up, the number of electrical points in the house also increase. While 10% of households had just one electric point, about 34% had more than one and less than 5 electrical points. Statistically speaking, this range (1-5) was the mode. Only about 20% of the families, had more than five electric points in the house (Table II. 39).

7. Toilet Facilities

It never ceases to surprise one that people are willing to do with less than minimal amenities (or unwillingly tolerate the lack of amenities).

Table II. 40

Nature of Toilet Facilities

Type of Toilet	Percent
No toilet facility	54 . 1
Pit latrine	7 . 3
Flush latrine	24 . 8
Dry type latrine	7 . 6
Sulabh shauchalaya	3 . 4
Any other	2 . 7

Another telling indicator of the socio-economic status of the group and the level of environmental hygiene is that 54% of the households have no toilet facilities, which means that open fields or woods or beaches are used for defecation. One quarter of all the households have a flush latrine, while all the other kinds of water closets together constitute 21% (Table II . 40).

8. Cooking Fuel

The question of cooking fuel is important not only to nail down another indicator of socio-economic status, but to yield yet another datum regarding women's drudgery and the time spent on gathering fuel.

The 'conventional' category here covers wood and dung (generally collected rather than purchased) as well as coal and kerosene, which are available in the market. Gas and electricity have been clubbed here as "modern" — since their use makes cooking less time-intensive. Even taking into account that both kinds are combined, less than 20% families use fuel that saves time. The impact of this fact on the life of the girl child will have to be assessed. If the cooking pot needs her labour, the obvious sacrifice may be her schooling (Table II . 41).

Table II. 41

Type of Cooking and Fuel used

Type of cooking fuel	Percent
Conventional (wood, dung, coal, kerosene)	77 . 9
Modern (gas, electricity)	9 . 1
Non-conventional (bio-gas, gobar gas)	0 . 6
Modern and conventional combined	7 . 4
N.A.	4 . 4

Head of the Household

When we planned the questionnaire, it was decided that we would find out who was considered head of the family, and how that person was related to the girl child who was included in the sample of this study.

Table II.42

Head of the Household: Relationship to Girl Child

Head of the Family	Percent
Father	83 . 8
Mother	5 . 2
Grandfather	6 . 5
Grandmother	2 . 0
Father-in-law	0 . 5
Mother-in-law	0 . 3

Conventionally, the eldest male is considered the head of the family. In the sample, in about 84% of the families, the father is seen as the head of the household, while the mother is considered the head in 5 . 2% of the families. In a few families (6 . 5%) the grandfather is seen as the head. In this sample, the female headed households constitute about 7% (in actual number, 864 families). Since a small number of girls in the sample were married, they consider their father or mother-in-law to be the head of the household (Table II. 42).

Family Structure

The category system of nuclear, supplemented nuclear, joint and extended is a fairly standard one for the contemporary Indian scene. It has long been observed by field workers that joint and extended families seen as "typically Indian" characterise families that are land-owning or affluent.

Table II.43

Type of Family

Type of family	Percent
Nuclear family (husband, wife and unmarried children)	72.4
Supplemented nuclear family (nuclear family with dependent parent)	10.7
Joint family	13.3
Extended family	3.6

By and large, poverty groups remain "nuclear" in their family structure (Table II . 43). While a nuclear structure may provide opportunities for the child to develop autonomy and to take an active part in family decisions, it reduces the number of potential child caregivers within the family. In turn, the burden falls upon the young girl child. In that context, this table has important implications for the quality of life for the girl child. Being "little mother" may give the girl child management skills fairly early in life; it is also likely to take away her childhood and thrust adult responsibilities on her long before she is ready physically or psychologically.

Table II.44

Total Number of Members in the Household

Members in the household	Percent	Members in the household	Percent
3 members	3.7	8 members	8.1
4 members	15.2	9 members	4.6
5 members	23.7	10 members	2.7
6 members	21.5	11 members	1.8
7 members	14.4	12 members	1.2

The old fashioned family portraits with 35 or 40 members around an old patriarch found in turn of the century photographs may have only historical relevance. Family size in India, like the joint family, has developed many myths around itself, including that of its ubiquity.

However there are 19% families with less than four members and most families have either five or six members. In this sample 45% of all families fall into the category of having 5 or 6 members. About 14% have seven members. Only 10% of the households are really large, having 9 - 12 members (Table II. 44).

Number of Adult Females

Who helps whom with work in the house?

Among how many is the drudgery of housekeeping (collecting water, gathering wood fuel, child care) shared? The presence of adult females, other than the mother in the household, is a highly relevant variable for the life of the woman and for the girl child in the family.

Table II.45

Number of Adult Females in the Family

Adult females in the Family	Percent
One	68 . 0
Two	21 . 2
Three	6 . 9
Four	2 . 2

More than two thirds of the households (68%) have only the mother and 21% have one other adult female in the household. A nuclear family with one or two dependent relatives, or an extended family with the bride of the brother included must be examples of families with more than one adult female (Table II . 45).

Gender and Family Size

When one takes up the question of family size, the number of children is a major aspect. Our interest was to see whether the girl child was under-represented, in a statistical sense. If only chance were operating there would be equal numbers of sons and daughters on the whole.

An important datum for this study is the number of daughters in the family. We examined this variable from the perspectives of families with one, two or three sons and one, two or three daughters. There is a bias for the male child that becomes evident in this kind of head count.

Families with only one daughter constitute more than 43% of the total number of households, while those with two daughters are 32% of the whole. This means that three quarters of all families have either one daughter or two daughters. Families that have one son only constitute 38 . 5% and those with two sons 27 . 3%. About two-thirds of all families have one or two sons (Table II . 46).

Table II.46

Gender and Family Size

Families and gender of children	Percent of families
One daughter	43 . 4
Two daughters	32 . 1
Three daughters	14 . 9
One son	38 . 5
Two sons	27 . 3
Three sons	9 . 0

This table can be seen to make a social statement. One may hazard that the gender breakup of the children now living may reflect the judicious neglect of girls. This is only an inference not a stated fact in any of the interviews.

Almost 89% of the households had intact families i.e. where the women had not been widowed or deserted. The women we were considering here were both the mothers of the girl children and other adult female members. About 10% of the families had women who had gone through divorce, separation, desertion or widowhood.

Only 0 . 5% of girls under 18 (60 in absolute number) fell into the category of divorced/separated/widowed.

Age of Parents

The question regarding the age of parents was mainly of demographic interest.

Taking a look at Table II.47 we may observe that in both cases there is a clustering of the chronological age in approximately every five year period - 30, 35, 40, 45 and 50 in the case of the father and 25, 30, 35, 40 and 45 in the case of the mother. This is a good example of how age is treated; not exactly, but as an approximation. People tend to be thirty for a few years, thirty-five for a few years and so on. Social scientists in India have always found that even demographic data (like age and income) are expressed as approximations, since people do not generally seem to place much value on precision and exactness.

Table II. 47

Parents' Chronological Age

Father's Age	Percent	Mother's Age	Percent
Inapplicable (not alive)	7.0	20 Years	0.1
28 Years	1.0	21 Years	0.1
29 Years	0.4	22 Years	0.4
30 Years	5.0	23 Years	5.0
31 Years	0.5	24 Years	0.9
32 Years	2.7	25 Years	3.0
33 Years	1.0	26 Years	2.5
34 Years	1.0	27 Years	2.3
35 Years	11.0	28 Years	4.7
36 Years	2.1	29 Years	2.3
37 Years	1.6	30 Years	10.0
38 Years	4.1	31 Years	2.5
39 Years	1.3	32 Years	5.7
40 Years	15.0	33 Years	3.3
41 Years	1.2	34 Years	2.8
42 Years	4.0	35 Years	11.7
43 Years	1.5	36 Years	3.9
44 Years	1.0	37 Years	2.9
45 Years	11.4	38 Years	4.7
46 Years	1.4	39 Years	2.2
47 Years	1.3	40 Years	9.8
48 Years	2.3	41 Years	1.8
49 Years	0.8	42 Years	2.9
50 Years	7.8	43 Years	1.6
52 Years	1.4	44 Years	1.1
55 Years	3.4	45 Years	5.2
60 Years	2.4		

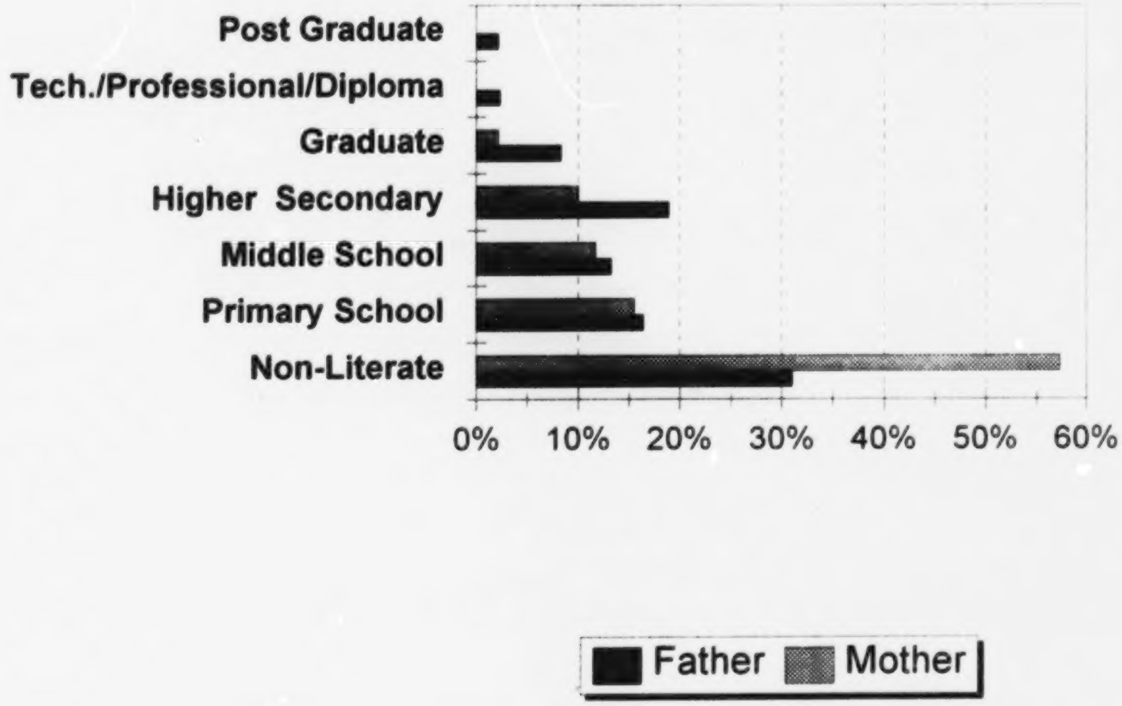
Parents' Education

The education of the parents becomes a good indicator of socio-economic status.

Table II. 48

Parents' Education

Level of Education	Fathers	Mothers
Inapplicable (not living)	7.2	-
Non-literate	31.0	57.3
Primary	16.5	15.5
Middle	13.2	11.7
High/Higher Secondary	18.9	10.0
Graduate	8.3	2.1
Postgraduate	2.1	0.6
Technical/Professional/Diploma/Degree	2.3	0.9



PARENTS' LEVEL OF EDUCATION

In the case of the fathers, about 31% of them were non-literate and the rest were spread somewhat evenly over Primary (16 . 5%), Middle (13 . 2%) and Higher Secondary (18 . 9%). A little over 8% of the fathers had a College degree and another 4% had Post-graduate or professional qualifications.

Data collected on the mothers' level of eduction reveals that 57% of them are non-literate. As in the case of the fathers' education , the rest of the sample was spread out rather evenly over Primary (15 . 5%), Middle (11 . 7) and Higher Secondary (10 . 0%). About 2% of the mothers had College degrees and 1 . 5% had Post-graduate or professional qualifications (Table II . 48).

Fathers' Occupation

The details on the nature of the parents' occupation help to delineate the socio-economic status of the families from which the girl children have been selected.

The table (Table II . 49) is self explanatory. Unskilled workers (10 . 3%) and agricultural labour (10 . 1%) constitute the largest categories. Petty business, marginal farming, piece rate work and unspecified service jobs together make up about a quarter of the entire sample. Occupational status tallies with the educational qualifications of the fathers, with about 14% holding white collar jobs, including professional ones.

Mother's Occupation

The mother's occupation has been viewed in three categories ie. nature of employment, sector in which mother is employed and how she is employed.

The first category is the nature of the mother's employment.

From Table II . 50 we can see that almost 60% of the mothers come in the category of 'Not working/N.A./D.K.' Of the 40% of mothers who do work, 19 . 3% are employed as agricultural labourers or as workers in agro-related activities. Home-based industry/ piece rate workers and crafts employ 6 . 7% of the working mothers. The rest of the sample is distributed in very small percentages over construction labourers (1 . 2%), Factory (0 . 5%), Service (3 . 3%) and so on.

Table II.49

Father s Occupation

Occupation	Percent
Senior Professional	3.2
Junior Professional and middle level official	5.0
Other white collar jobs	5.7
Service-unspecified	7.8
Skilled worker	9.1
Unskilled worker	10.3
Big farmer (more than 10 acres)	2.7
Medium farmer (5-10 acres)	3.7
Marginal farmer (1-5 acres)	8.2
Farmer (land unspecified)	5.6
Agricultural labourer	10.1
Large and medium business	4.6
Petty business	6.0
Washerman/barber/cobbler	2.5
Piece rate workers	2.4
Any other occupation	3.3
No specific occupation (unemployed)	1.3
Inapplicable (fathers not living)	6.7

Table II.50

Mother's Occupation

Employment	Percent
Industrial/factory worker	0.5
Agricultural labourer and related activities	19.3
Construction labourer	1.2
Semi-skilled labourer	1.0
Home-based industry/piece rate worker/Crafts	6.7
Service (clerical, teaching, para-medical etc.)	3.3
Business/Self employed	2.7
Others	5.0
N.A./D.K./Not working	60.5

The next table shows the distribution of the mothers working in the organized and unorganized sector.

Table II.51

Organised or Unorganised Sector

Sector	Percent
Organized sector	4.5
Unorganized sector	35.8
Inapplicable - not working	58.7
D.K. & N.A.	1.1

Of the 40% of mothers who are working, the large majority (35.8%) work in the unorganized sector and only 4.5% in the organized sector. (Table II.51)

The next Table (II.52) shows how the mother is employed.

It is seen that 12.2% of the mothers are employed for wages, while 9.3% of them are self-employed. A small number (5.8%) work in home-based production, while 6.5% work jointly with the family in agriculture or related tasks.

Table II.52

How Mothers are Employed

Employed	Percent
Self-employed	9.3
Employed for wages	12.2
Working with family (shared piece wages)	6.5
Working in home-based production	5.8
Any other	6.9
Inapplicable - not working	58.5
N.A.	0.9

Parents' Income

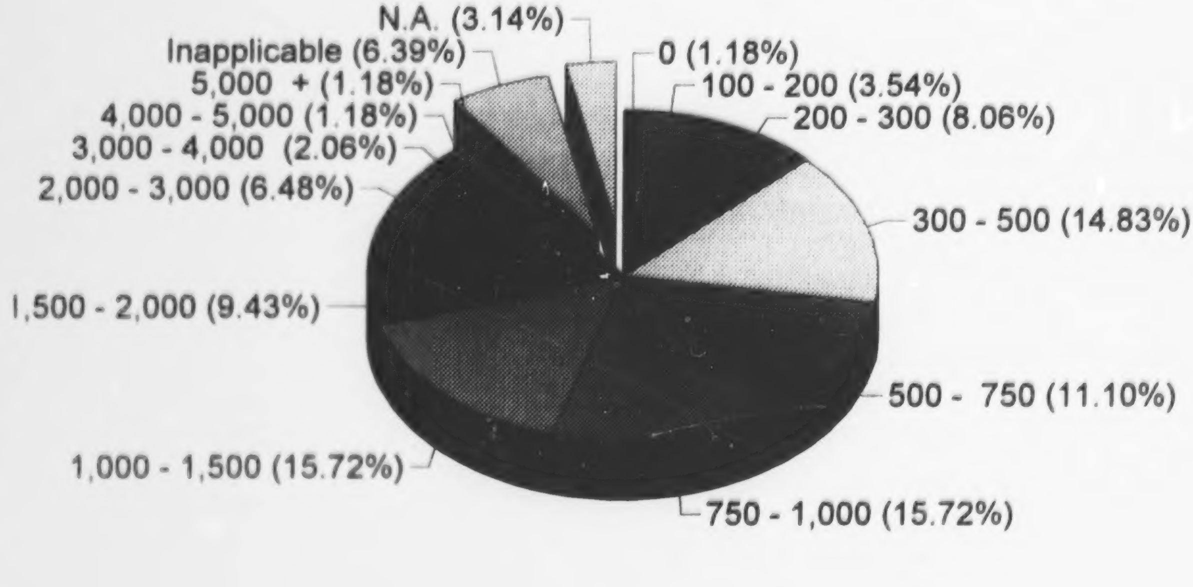
Extracting the information about the income of a person is a difficult task. However, our trained field personnel were persistent and succeeded in getting relevant information on the subject. The occupational status defined in the previous table gets texture as we study the income data.

Table II . 53

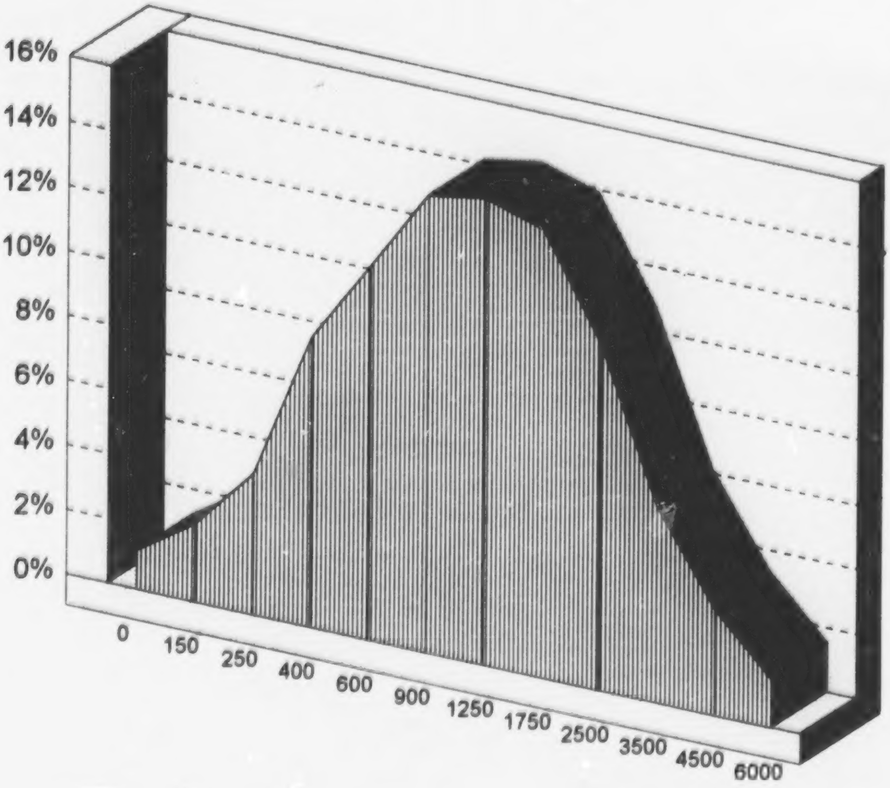
Father's Income

Income	Percent	Income	Percent
No income	1 . 2	Rs . 1501 - 2000	9 . 6
Rs . 101 - 200	3 . 6	Rs . 2001 - 3000	6 . 6
Rs . 201 - 300	8 . 2	Rs . 3001 - 4000	2 . 1
Rs . 301 - 500	15 . 1	Rs . 4001 - 5000	1 . 2
Rs . 501 - 750	11 . 3	Rs . 5000 +	1 . 2
Rs . 751 - 1000	16 . 0	Inapplicable	6 . 5
Rs . 1001 - 1500	12 . 2	N.A.	3 . 2

Almost 55% of the entire sample of fathers have a monthly income ranging from Rs.300 to Rs.1500/-. While there is some hesitation in research in accepting income statements at face value, the rather low level of occupation of the majority of fathers does give support to the credibility of the stated incomes (Table II . 53).



FATHER'S INCOME



FATHER'S INCOME

Table II.54
Monthly Income of Mother (Cash only)

Income	Percent
Inapplicable - not working/no separate payment/no payment	65.8
Less than Rs. 50/-	1.1
Rs. 51 - 100	3.4
Rs. 101 - 200	9.1
Rs. 201 - 300	8.3
Rs. 301 - 500	5.2
Rs. 501 - 1000	2.6
More than 1000	2.4
D.K.	0.3
N.A.	1.8

Mother's Income

The mother's income has been divided into two tables. One shows the income (in cash) per month and the other table depicts the method of payment of the mother's monthly income.

Here, 65 . 8% of the mothers in the sample came in the category of "Not working/ no separate payment/no payment". Other than that, about 17 . 4% earned between Rs. 100-300 a month, 5 . 2% earned between Rs. 300-500/- and only about 2 . 4% earned above Rs. 1000/- p.m. (Table II.54).

Table II.55

Paid in Cash or Kind

Cash/kind	Percent
Cash	29 . 4
Kind	0 . 8
Partly in cash, partly in kind	2 . 9
No fixed mode of payment	0 . 4
Working - but no separate payment to her/no payment	6 . 9
Inapplicable - not working	58 . 5
N.A.	1 . 1

It is seen that only 29 . 4% are paid in cash, while 0 . 8% are paid in kind and 2 . 9% are paid partly in cash and partly in kind (Table II.55).

Table II.56

Adult Male Earners **Adult Female Earners**

Number of Male Earners in the Family	Proportion of families (percent)	Number of Female Earners in the Family	Proportion of families (percent)
One	4 . 2	One	39 . 0
Two	72 . 3	Two	4 . 4
Three	15 . 5	Three	1 . 0
Four	5 . 5	Four	-
Five	1 . 7	Five	-
None	0 . 0	None	55 . 4

Proportion of Family Earners

Almost all families had at least one adult male earner, and most of them (72%) had two. About 55% of the women were not earning, while in 39% of the families, the adult female did bring in an income. In only 4.4% of families were there two adult female earners (Table II.56).

Table II.57

Child Earners - Girls / **Child Earners - Boys**

No. of girl earners in the family	Prop. of families (percent)	No. of boy earners in the family	Prop. of families (percent)
One	10.5	One	7.6
Two	1.9	Two	1.3
Three	-	Three	-
Four	-	Four	-
Five	-	Five	-
None	87.4	None	90.8

Twelve percent of the girls and 9% of the boys work for a wage outside the home, or in recognised economic activity within the home (Table II.58).

Table II.58

Total Household Income (Monthly)

Household Income	Percent of households	Household Income	Percent of households
Rs. 101 - 200	1.7	Rs. 1501 - 2000	12.2
Rs. 201 - 300	3.6	Rs. 2001 - 3000	10.6
Rs. 301 - 500	9.4	Rs. 3001 - 4000	4.2
Rs. 501 - 750	12.9	Rs. 4001 - 5000	2.3
Rs. 751 - 1000	17.7	Rs. 5000 +	3.3
Rs. 1001 - 1500	17.6	N.A.	3.8

Total Monthly Household Income

When asked about household income, the figure one gets must be treated only as an approximation. The household income must be considered along with father's income and the number of earners in the family. The largest majority (70%) of all families have a household income ranging between Rs.500 and Rs.3000/- (Table II.58). With the average family size being 5 or 6, the per capita income is found to range from Rs. 100/- to Rs. 600/- p.m.

The sample was drawn to reach the population at the lower ranges of the SES scale and both occupation and income data provide the quantitative support to the objective. The abjectly poor seem to enter this data only in an occasional sample.

Income of Female Earners

What do the female workers earn? Not much, if one look at the figures (Table II.59).

Perhaps the category we should consider most important in this is the second last one. "Inapplicable - part of household income" - since women's work is invisible, their earnings rightly have no existence. That finding is supported. The row above that states "No individual income" - and this could also be explained in several ways. The majority of women earners fall in the three income categories from Rs. 101 to 200, Rs. 201 to 300 and Rs. 301 to 500.

Table II.59

Female Earners' Income

Income	Percent
Less than Rs. 100/-	2.3
Rs. 101 - 200	9.4
Rs. 201 - 300	8.2
Rs. 301 - 500	5.6
Rs. 501 - 750	2.1
Rs. 751 - 1000	1.7
Rs. 1001 - 1500	1.0
No individual income	10.5
Inapplicable - part of household income	56.5
N.A.	1.0

Girl Earners

A somewhat similar pattern emerges with the girl earners.

Table II.60

Girl Earners' Income

Income	Percent	Income	Percent
Less than Rs. 100/-	1.3	No individual income	4.7
Rs. 101 - 200	2.3	Inapplicable	87.9
Rs. 201 - 300	2.0	N.A.	0.3
Rs. 301 - 500	1.1		

To begin with only 12% of the girls are working for a wage. Out of these, 5% earn amounts under Rs. 300/- p.m. Approximately another 5% contribute to family work — but do not have an individual income (Table II. 60).

Boy Earners

Boys earn even less than girls and there are marginally fewer earners among the boys in the family, probably because more of them are in school than are the girls.

Table II.61

Boy Earners' Income

Income	Percent
Rs. 101 - 200	1.3
Rs. 201 - 300	1.2
Rs. 301 - 500	1.2
No individual income	3.2
Inapplicable - no boy earner	91.3
N.A.	0.1

Education of Eldest Male

The education of the eldest male (not the father) was a matter of enquiry. The eldest male was especially considered because it was felt that apart from the parents, the significant others in the family could be a source of inspiration for the girl child's education. However, in this sample it can be seen that the pattern of education of the other adult male approximates that of the male head of household.

Table II.62

Education of Eldest Male (not the father)

Level of Education	Percent	Level of Education	Percent
Inapplicable	18 . 4	High/Higher Secondary	16 . 4
Non-literate	22 . 3	College - no degree	3 . 5
Primary	20 . 1	Postgraduate	2 . 5
Middle	14 . 5	Technical/Professional/Diploma	1 . 2

Since in 69% of the cases, the eldest male was the brother of the girl child, there does not seem to be such a dramatic difference between generations (father and son), only a marginal one.

Occupation of Eldest Male

Similarly, the occupational status of the eldest male was investigated. In many cases, the eldest male may have been the brother of the girl child, still a student or waiting to be employed.

Table II.63

Eldest Male Occupation

Occupation	Percent
No specific occupation (unemployed)	53 . 6
White collar job	1 . 2
Service (unspecified)	2 . 4
Skilled worker	3 . 4
Unskilled worker	3 . 7
Medium farmer (5-10 acres)	1 . 2
Marginal farmer (1-5 acres)	2 . 2
Farmers (land-unspecified)	1 . 7
Agricultural labourer	4 . 1
Petty business	1 . 6
Inapplicable	17 . 9

The consonance between the data in this table and that of father's occupation (Table II. 49) establishes that on the whole, the occupations of the men in the family were at approximately the same level.

Eldest Female Relation

This table sheds light directly on who the eldest female relation (other than the mother) was in the household.

Table II.64

Eldest Female Relation

Female Relation	Percent	Female Relation	Percent
Grandmother	12.7	Sister	40.7
Mother-in-law	0.6	Sister-in-law	6.1
Aunt	2.0	Inapplicable	37.1

Many supplemented nuclear families tend to have one parent living with them, and we find that 12.7% children have a grandmother. Since over 40% mention "sister", it is evident that the family structure in these cases was nuclear.

Education of the Eldest Female

The Table (II.65) shows the educational status of the eldest female (not the mother). The 'inapplicable' category takes away more than 31% of the responses.

Completed Primary (13.5%) and Middle (7.7%) constitute the largest class of educational qualifications into which the eldest female falls.

Table II.65

Education of the Eldest Female

Education	Percent	Education	Percent
Inapplicable	37.5	Middle	7.7
Non-literate	30.5	High/Higher Secondary	1.5
Primary	13.5	Graduate	1.1

The close parallel in levels of education between mothers and others (grandmother, aunt or sister) can be seen here.

Informant

Who responded to the household questionaire? In the majority of studies, a questionaire administered within the house is more likely to be answered by women than men. That observation was supported in this study as well (Table II. 66).

Table II.66

Relationship of the Informant to the Girl Child

Relationship	Percent	Relationship	Percent
Grandfather	1 . 6	Brother	1.. 9
Grandmother	1 . 7	Sister	1 . 4
Father	32 . 1	Self	4 . 6
Mother	54 . 6		

In most cases (54 . 6%) the mothers were the respondents to the questionnaire, with fathers constituting 32%. The other categories are of minor importance, size-wise, except 'self'. One assumes that the 4 . 6% mentioned here as 'self' indicates that the girl child herself, came from the older age group within the sample, since she was able to answer the large number of questions on a variety of matters.

Chapter III

SOCIALIZATION AND GENDER

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Chapter III

SOCIALIZATION AND GENDER

Socialization is the cradle of the values of a family. What parents teach the next generation reflects what they consider most important. Thus, when we find out about what is said by parents, (and what is left unsaid), what is rewarded, what is punished - what the expectations are of a girl's behaviour (as different from a boy's), how parental aspirations for their children are communicated, forced or reinforced, we are researching salient issues. All these are questions we ask both of the girl child herself and of the mother or other significant agent of socialization. And from their responses, a composite picture is built up, which gives an indication of the growth and upbringing of the girl child in India.

Most conventional theories in Psychology and Sociology have tended to treat the family as the safe haven for the child, as the cushion against the vicissitudes of life in the "outside world". There is a counterpoint in sociological thought which propounds that the family itself is the risk factor from which children need protection. That is to say, the family may be as much the source of the problem as it is generally considered to be the source of a solution for the problems encountered in society.

When we planned the study, both perspectives on the family prevailed in our discussions. There were some who pointed out that in the face of harsh societal gender discrimination and general poverty conditions, the family was the only refuge for the girl child. The counterpoint was that the family was the main agent for gender socialization, beginning the operation of gender bias even before the birth of the infant. Statistical data from several well documented studies on amniocentesis leading to large scale female foeticide illustrate the existence of the enemy within the family.

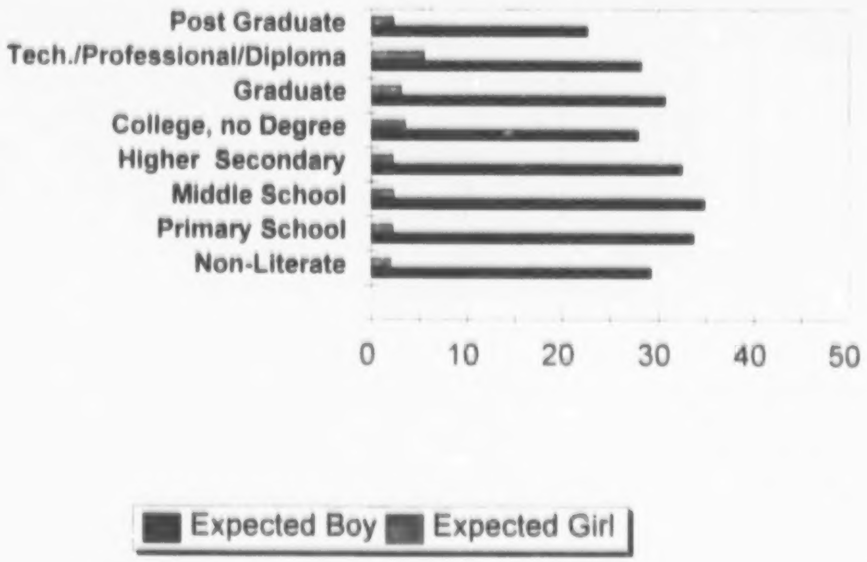
Several major aspects of socialization have been included in the questions that were formulated to arrive at a picture of the gender attitudes integrated into the family's customs and mores. Some of them were direct and perhaps obvious in their purpose to the respondents. Others were indirect, necessitating on the part of the researchers an interpretation of the responses given. There was a judicious mixture of several types of questions and different sources of information were identified in order to throw light on the quality of life of the girl child in the family.

With the impact of the family welfare propaganda on the consciously articulated statements, as well as on the collective unconscious of the Indian people, some trace of the value for smaller family size has become part of an accepted norm. However, where "small family" is articulated as a value — the gender break up tends to be a preference for one boy/one girl in about 50% of the cases and two boys and one girl in the other 50%. This means that even when the small family norm is internalised, the bias in favour of the male will persist, with demographic consequences, which are disastrous in a different way, from that of over population.

Gender Expectation of the Unborn Child

The mother's expectation (hope) about the sex of the child during the first pregnancy was ascertained. Almost two thirds of all mothers (64 . 5% to be exact) said that they left it to God and did not expect either sex particularly.

Thirty one percent of all mothers said they expected a boy and only **two percent expected a girl.** Here 'expected' should be taken as another expression for 'desired'. There is no gainsaying the fact that for the vast majority of families, the birth of a girl is the "error factor" in the expectation, rejected at the confidence level of .025! The father's level of education is treated as an indicator of socio-economic status for the analysis that follows.



S1. GENDER EXPECTATION OF GIRL OR BOY
Related to Father's Level of Education

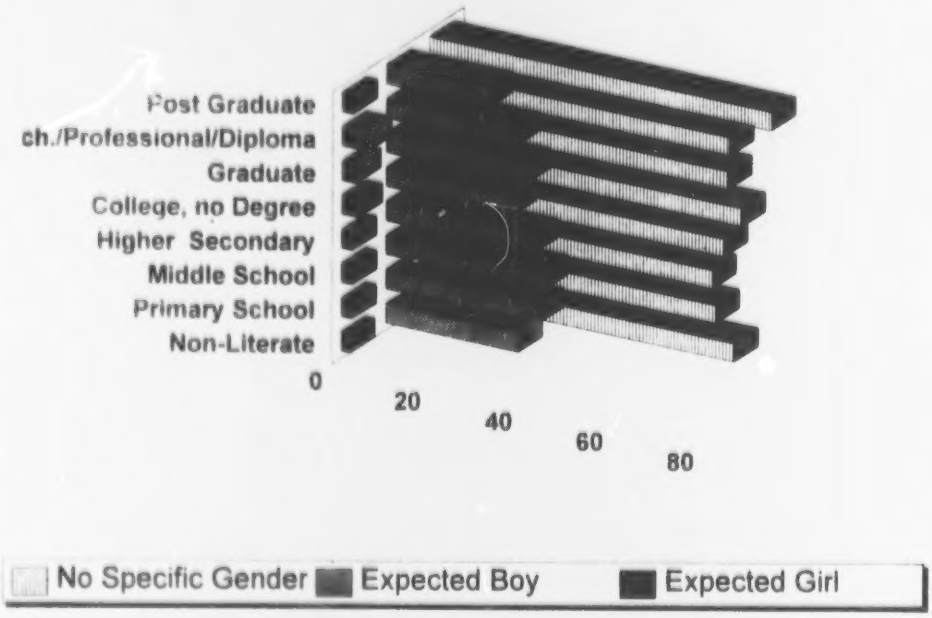
Table III.1

Father's Education and Gender Expectation of Unborn Child

Father's Education	No specific gender expected	Expected a boy	Expected a girl
Non-literate	66.9	29.2	2.0
Primary School	62.7	33.7	2.2
Middle School	61.9	34.8	2.3
Higher Secondary	64.4	32.4	2.2
College, no Degree	68.3	27.9	3.5
Graduate	65.2	30.7	3.1
Technical/Professional Diploma	65.6	28.2	5.5
Post Graduate	74.7	22.6	2.3

(All numbers are in percentages)

While one may hope that formal education will have a positive effect on the gender bias, one finds that there is no relationship between the father's level of education and the expectation of the gender of the unborn (Table III.1). Female gender devaluation



S2. GENDER EXPECTATION OF UNBORN CHILD
Related to Father's Level of Education

is seen across all education levels. Not wanting a girl to be born is an attitude that becomes a great leveller; neither education nor income has any effect on the attitudes to the girl child's birth.

When we look at the relationship between father's income and gender expectation, about a third of the entire sample (there is a range between 25 . 4% and 36 . 0% across income levels) expected or wanted a son. Only about 2% expected a daughter and this was across the income spectrum from Rs.200/- p.m. to Rs.5000/- p.m. Again, this is a finding that clearly reveals that it is not poverty that forces parents to reject the female, but a stronger cultural thread that runs through all economic levels and geographic regions.

Celebrations on the Arrival of an Infant

There are several socio-economic status variables that were felt would be relevant in the study of the situation of the girl child. In our study, we have data on father's education, occupation and income as well as household income and the family's level of indebtedness. In social science research of this kind, to check out information from one variable, it is not uncommon to use parallel data from a related variable for a kind of internal validity.

We wished to identify a variable of economic status that would be sufficiently discriminating, apart from that of income per se. More than 80% of the families owned their own homes; so owning or renting accommodation would not have given us a well distributed variable. The size of house was therefore selected as the independent variable for the study of celebrations on the birth of a child.

Table III. 2

Economic Status and Celebration of the Birth of the Infant

No. of rooms in the house	Special Celebration for boys	Same Celebration for boys and girls	No Celebration for either
One	8 . 8	2 . 0	23 . 6
Two	11 . 1	1 . 6	20 . 6
Three	12 . 6	1 . 8	21 . 0
Four	12 . 5	1 . 3	19 . 5
Five	15 . 2	1 . 7	21 . 2
Six +	16 . 7	0 . 3	19 . 8

The number of rooms in the house appeared to be a neatly quantifiable economic indicator and so we analysed some of the data in relationship to this variable.

There were no special celebrations for the birth of a girl in any of the families in this sample and such a column for which a code had been assigned was therefore omitted from this table. Between 8 and 17% of the families specially celebrate the arrival of a son (or admit to doing so). With increasing prosperity, as indicated by the number of rooms in the house, the arrival of a son is more noticeably welcomed. While there were no celebrations at all for either sex in approximately one-fifth of the entire sample, having the some celebration for boys and girls was mentioned only by 1 to 2% of the sample. In households with six rooms, only 0.3% of the total number of families celebrated the birth of a son and daughter equally. It becomes clear that gender inequality in such matters is an internalised norm, one not related to socio-economic status; in fact, the data suggests that gender equality tends to be adversely affected by increasing affluence.

Given the parental expectations as analysed above, it is clear the arrival of the girl child was considered a not-too-happy event by most members especially if it was the second girl child. We therefore wanted to probe a little to find out what proportion of the next of kin said that they had been unhappy in the case of a daughter's arrival and what proportion said that they had been happy. These are statements based on the perceptions of the mother of the girl child. She recalled other people's reactions to the birth of her daughter. There is the possibility of recall error, of course; however a pattern seems to have emerged.

Preference for a son is clearly related to patriarchy, to lineage being continued by male progeny, in addition to several other well-known factors. In this context, it would be instructive to study the table of "Reactions to the Birth of a Girl Child" (Table III . 3), a table which has been developed from the interview of the mother and her perceptions.

Table III. 3

Reactions to the Birth of a Girl Child

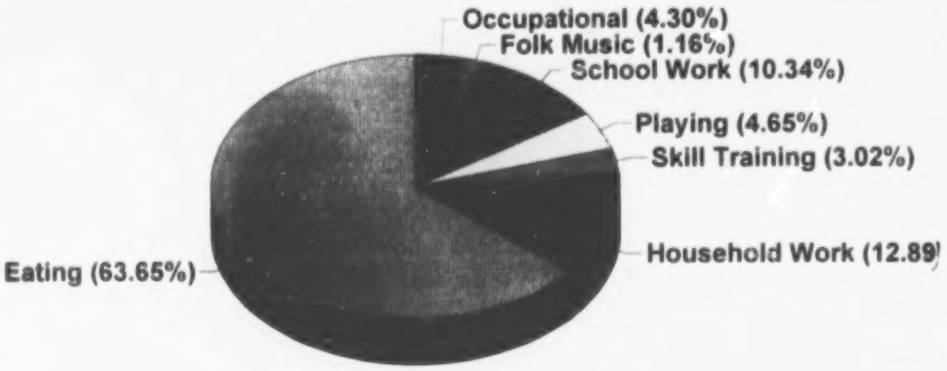
Relationship to Girl Child	Happy	Unhappy
Mother	73 . 1	14 . 7
Father	71 . 6	15 . 6
Maternal grandmother	63 . 2	13 . 9
Maternal grandfather	62 . 7	13 . 4
Paternal grandmother	58 . 7	18 . 0
Paternal grandfather	57 . 6	15 . 4

(All numbers are in percentages)

It is interesting that the unhappiness over the birth of a daughter is a little higher in the case of paternal grandparents, compared to maternal grandparents. This could also be related to the erroneously held belief that the sex of the child is determined by the mother. The tendency to be disappointed and unhappy that the grandchild is a girl is further compounded by the implied "blame" on the mother, which is likely to be higher from the perspective of her parents-in-law.

Activities Daughters Share with Parents

The stereotype that Indian families are closely knit, intimate units has been challenged by a great deal of research data in the last three decades. Being physically together in a small area may make for an unavoidable closeness, but proximity cannot be confused with intimacy. Playfulness, sharing interests, having family jokes, these seem to be exceptional in the average Indian family. There is a level of earnestness and "let us get on with the task of living" that absorbs all the time and energy of most of the family, most of the time. The element of playfulness in the relationship between parents and children is not commonly observed. In addition, play activities beyond the age of 7 or 8 were not encouraged in the case of girls. In our total sample, 23.6% of the girls said that there were no play activities and the question was not relevant. The graphic illustration that follows provides the full picture.



S3. ACTIVITIES THE GIRL SHARES
With Both Her Parents

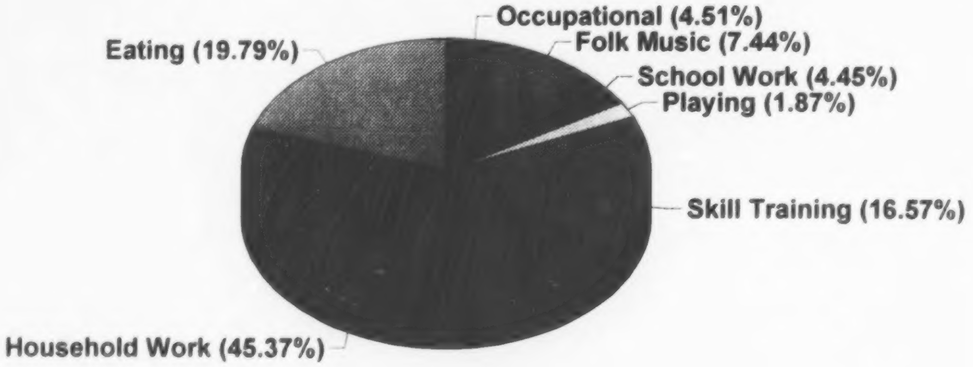
Table III. 4

Activities that Girl Children Share with their Parents

	Eating	House work	Skill Training	Playing	School work	Folk Music	Occupational
Share with mother	33.8	77.5	28.3	3.2	7.6	12.7	7.7
Share with father	2.5	0.5	0.4	0.8	7.6	0.2	0.7
Share with both parents	54.8	11.1	2.6	4.0	8.9	1.0	3.7
Share with siblings, and friends	7.8	5.6	25.7	66.4	49.1	36.9	23.6

(All numbers are in percentages)

With the mother, 3.2% girls share their play and with the father, less than 1% (0.8%) do so. With both jointly, 4% girls mention sharing play; but two-thirds of all girls play with friends, siblings and other members of the family (Table III . 4). Parents are a generation



S4. ACTIVITIES THE GIRL SHARES
With Her Mother

apart and not considered the right company for such "trivialities" as play with their children. Fun, fantasy, playfulness, laughter — the very essence of the development process in children — is denied to girls (and to boys as well) or at least, reduced to nearly nothing.

Very predictably, 77.5% of the girls share household work with the mother only (S_4) (compared to 0.5% with the father only). In home-based occupations, there is a generational transfer of skills, but it appears to be from mother to daughter, rather than from both parents. This finding is also supported in other research where skilled crafts and semi-skilled activities like beedi rolling take place in the women's courtyard. Craft tasks also tend to be gender-based and passed on from mother to daughter and father to son

In about a third of the sample, the girl child eats with her mother only. When taken together with the data on who eats first and who eats last, it becomes clear that the girls have to share with their mothers the food remaining after the men and the boys have eaten. It may be noted that in our sample, states where 65 - 72% of the girls eat with the mother only are Bihar, U.P. and Orissa.

In a little over half of all the families in our sample, the family eats together. For the girl child, it is one of the few times she gets with the father, since in most of her other activities he has no role at all. His help with the daughter's school homework is an activity seen as appropriate in about 8% of the families, but that is all.

The role of the father in sharing activities with his daughter is so marginal, that it reflects one of the great tragedies of Indian family life. It is our observation in the field (and supported by earlier findings from several studies on socialization available as theses and dissertations) that the Indian father has abrogated his responsibility of parenting. The tasks of providing for food, education and marriage are in a sense the economic duties of the father, but beyond what is the basic minimum - the father steps out of the scene, surrendering his socialization role and losing the opportunity to develop emotional closeness with his children.

This can now be seen in the context of some of the disaggregated data from the field (Table III . 5). It is interesting to note that only in one or two samples is there a low percentage of the report "No play". Here examples of the Kerala, Pune, Bombay and Berhampur responses may be noted. These are also the places where school attendance is much higher and the opportunities for girls and boys tend to be more equitous. Mothers, more than fathers, are seen as persons for the girls to play with, but even the girls citing mothers constitute a relatively small percentage.

The relationship of the response of 'No play' to poverty, household drudgery and the strain of eking out a living cannot be denied. Nevertheless, even at levels beyond subsistence, playing is considered trivial and unimportant. The psychological cost of this deprivation has never been calculated and will definitely add to the debit column in our accounting for the quality of childhood.

How does a girl spend her time? How much time is spent in household work? Does she have any free time? We know that work and leisure are seldom separated and one activity moves into another. Most of the activities are related to maintenance and survival i.e.. fetching of water, food or fodder, cooking, serving,

Table III. 5

Girl Children
Sharing Play Activities

(Selected Samples)

Location of Centre	With Mother only	With Father only	With Both parents	With Siblings & friends	No Play/ N.A.
Total Sample	3.2	0.8	4.0	66.4	23.6
Andhra Pradesh Coastal	11.0	1.2	13.0	48.2	26.6
West Bengal Calcutta	4.5	0.7	5.2	73.2	16.5
Bihar	0.5	2.5	1.8	77.7	17.5
Delhi & (U.P.)	2.0	0.3	0.7	81.0	16.0
Gujarat Baroda	5.9	0.7	11.6	50.5	31.3
Karnataka Mysore	4.3	1.0	5.0	73.7	16.0
Kerala Trivandrum	2.8	0.8	4.7	90.8	1.2
Maharashtra *					
Bombay (2)	3.2	1.3	6.8	82.0	6.7
Pune	8.7	3.8	17.0	68.4	1.9
Orissa					
Berhampur	3.0	1.3	1.3	86.0	9.0
Uttar Pradesh					
Varanasi	4.3	0.6	1.6	63.0	30.3

* Since there were two teams from Bombay, the samples have been referred to in all tables as Bombay 1 (TISS) and Bombay 2 (SNDT).

cleaning, washing clothes and vessels and keeping the house clean. By the time all the tasks are completed, day has turned into night and women and children collapse in exhaustion. When young women with University degrees (which in our social science index, reads women from upper middle class) are in the field asking questions of less privileged persons, it is not always easy for them to rephrase a question in a more familiar idiom. It also requires insight and experience to know when the response is authentic. "How do you spend your free time?" is such a question. It is also a difficult question to translate into most Indian languages, which explains why 31% of the total sample of girl children answered that they do household work and cooking in their free time, 16% girls responded saying they do their homework and 4% that they work in the fields. In writing this summary, one does not have the confidence to say that the question has been understood by all. In this set of responses, 31% do say they do nothing in particular. The rest treat free time as time that is available for their routine activities.

And with whom is that girl child's elusive free time spent? With friends (67.3%), with female members of the family (37.8%) and with female cousins (18.2%). The gender preference (and control) on this is very clear (Table III. 6).

Table III. 6

Gender of Companions and Time spent by Girl Children

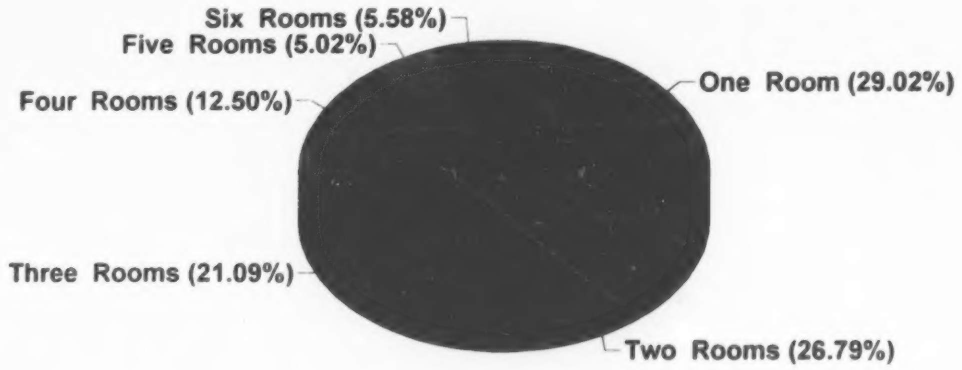
Persons	Female	Male	Both Male & Female
Family members	37 . 8	0 . 8	55 . 8
Cousins	18 . 2	1 . 0	22 . 0
Friends	67 . 3	0 . 3	12 . 3

(Figures reflect percentage of time spent)

No better comment can be made on the value for the girl's reputation (and her safety) than the statistic which reveals here that girl children spend only 1% or 2% of the time with male family members. The proportion of girl children spending time with male friends is reported as 0.3% while the number who report time spent with female friends (67.3%) has already been noted. The category of "both male and female" does indicate the bridging of the gender gulf. Also, as in many traditional cultures, there is a tendency to trust kinsfolk more than unrelated persons (Table III . 6).

Like charity, segregation begins at home. Part of the reason for the high value placed by mothers on ensuring that girls are only in the company of their own sex is the fear of incest and intra-familial violence, especially when the adult males are also imbibers of alcohol. This finding did not emerge directly from this study, but is extrapolated from other studies and observations to serve here as a plausible explanation.

It is also self evident that poverty forces the girl to drudgery and household chores. As in earlier analyses, we looked at the number of rooms in the house (S_5) as an independent variable and considered all the activities done by the girl. In this categorization we were able to put household work and school homework in their own separate categories, and not under "free time" (Table III . 7).



S5. NUMBER OF ROOMS IN THE HOUSE

Table III.7

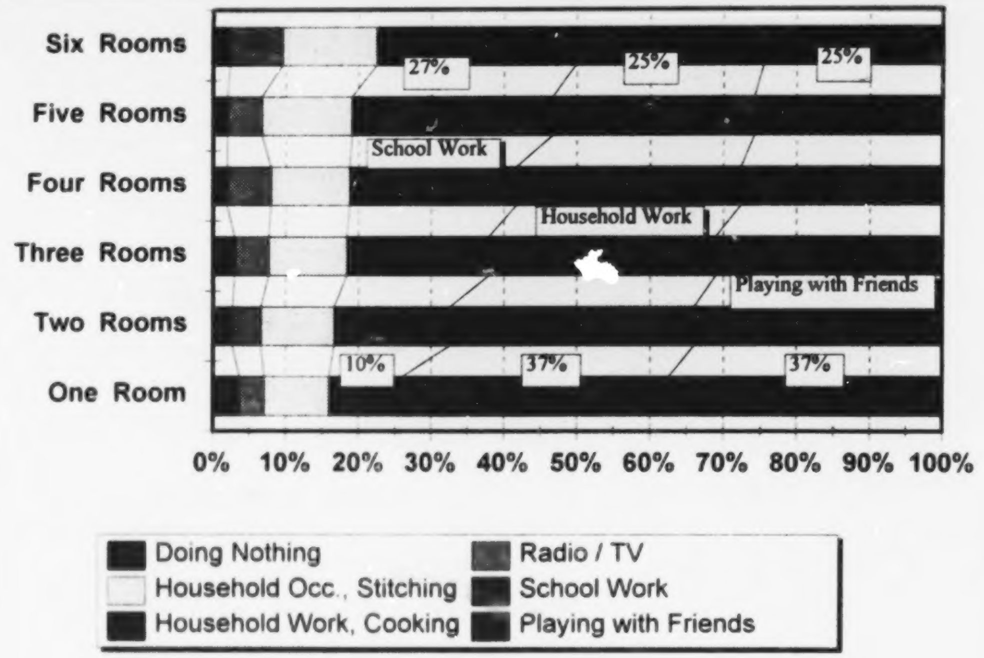
Size of House (No. of Rooms) and Time spent on Activities by Girl Children

Activities	Percent of Time spent on Activities						
	One room house (26)	Two room house (24)	Three room house (18.9)	Four room house (11.2)	Five room house (4.5)	Six room house (5.0)	Mean
Household work/cooking	34.3	31.8	29.8	29.2	26.0	24.6	31.1
Knitting/ stitching	3.8	4.8	6.9	7.2	9.8	10.4	5.8
School work (Homework)	9.5	15.2	18.8	21.9	26.0	26.3	16.2
Household occupation	4.6	4.8	3.4	3.1	1.9	2.0	4.0
Listening to Radio/TV	3.1	3.7	4.5	5.7	4.5	6.9	4.1
Playing with Friends	35.1	32.3	29.8	26.3	24.3	23.6	31.0
Doing nothing	3.5	2.6	2.9	1.9	1.9	2.3	2.8

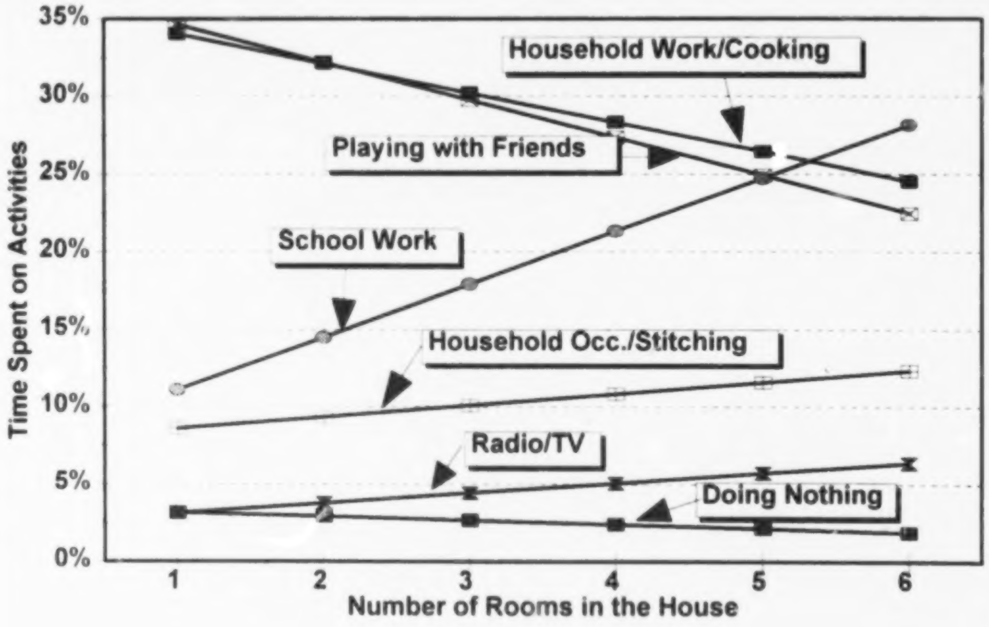
(All figures are in percentages).

Irrespective of economic status, the female child's role in household work and cooking is a constant: one quarter to one third of her time is given to it. There is an inverse relationship : the number claiming to be engaged in housework decreases as the size of the house increases - but this is only a range of 10% (from 34% to 24%). Spending time on knitting/stitching also goes up with economic status, as might be expected. The number of girls involved in the activity has a clear linear relationship to number of rooms in the house (which serves here as an operational definition of socio-economic status) - ranging from 3.8% to 10.4% (Table III.7).

There is also a marginal relationship of economic status to time spent in entertainment (Radio, TV) but much lower than might have been expected. The number of girls who report playing with friends as an activity decreases as they go up the economic scale. As the family's status goes up, more time of the girls is spent in school work / homework. The socio-economic difference is most visible in the category of time spent in homework, varying from 9.5% to 26.3% as the size of the residence increases (S_6 and S_7).



S6. ACTIVITIES OF THE GIRL
Related to the Rooms in the House

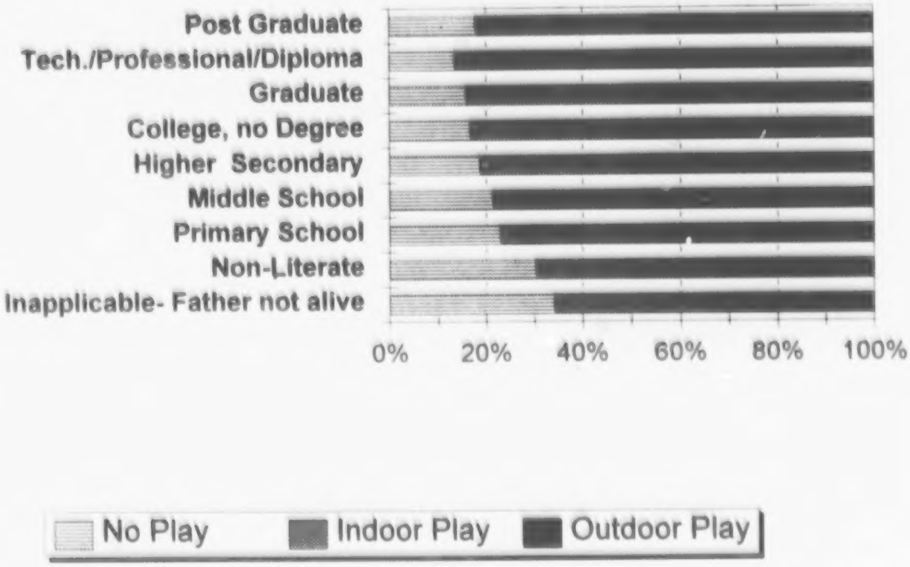


S7. THE GIRL'S ACTIVITIES
Related to the Number of Rooms

"Doing nothing", a frequent response to questions, is not treated by us as an unimportant category. It may represent the only leisure and unaccounted time that a girl has — a time to stand and stare, to dream. It is interesing that there is not much variation across socio-economic groups on this variable.

Girl Children's Play

The proportion of families in which girl children report "No play at all" is inversely related to the father's level of education. There is also a moderate direct relationship with father's level of education and the outdoor play of daughters (S_8).



S8. PREFERRED PLAY OF CHILDREN
Related to Fathers' Level of Education

The proportion of girls reporting that they spend time on indoor play is a constant across educational levels. The variable of time available from household work and the variable of safe spaces for outdoor play are invisible in this table, but are probably powerful antecedents in explaining the relationships. (Table III.8)

Table III.9 depicts selected data from five sub-samples, showing the category of girls reporting no play at all, as varying from 23 to 54%. The proportions of indoor and outdoor play do not seem to fall into any pattern, being as much a function of the ecological setting, as of cultural rules.

Table III. 8

Preferred Play of Girl Children

Father's Education	No Play at all	Indoor Play	Outdoor Play
Inapplicable - Father not alive	31.4	31.0	34.8
Non-literate	36.4	38.1	32.5
Primary	19.4	33.4	43.6
Middle	18.1	31.0	47.6
High/Higher Secondary	16.0	31.0	50.2
College, no degree	11.9	32.9	50.2
Graduate	10.2	32.9	51.2
Post-graduate	12.5	35.9	46.2
Technical/Professional	9.9	36.7	49.8

(All figures are in percentages)

When we designed the questionnaire, we were keen to separate the games played by the girls that were gender-stereotypic, from those that were not. However, since almost all the girl children's play activities were gender-specific (doll play, skipping,

Table III. 9

Preferred Play - Selected Samples

Location of Centre	Do not play at all	Indoor games	Outdoor games
Andhra Pradesh Telengana	54.1	5.3	40.6
Bihar	29.5	59.0	11.5
Delhi (& U.P.)	23.1	13.0	63.7
Gujarat Baroda	30.9	25.9	43.2
Kerala Trivandrum	39.0	27.6	33.3

(All figures are in percentages)

playing house), the category in the coding system was not very clearly understood even by the research staff that did the coding. Hence the category of "gender-stereotyped activity:" was dropped, and only indoor and outdoor games were clearly differentiated in the tables and in the discussion.

Boys and girls seldom played together and this was an observation in both urban and rural areas. If they played together at all, it was in the early years of childhood upto eight years or so. The girl children were asked if they played with their brothers and 50% of them said "Never" and in about 10% it was inapplicable, as they did not have brothers. Some of them (28%) answered that they did play with brothers sometimes and only 9% reported this joint activity as being quite frequent.

Many of the girls who said they never played with brothers, had brothers older to them; and as noted in the West Bengal study, the girls who reported that they played with brothers were interpreting sibling care as playing with their brothers. Since they had to keep the child out of the mother's way, they entertained them and "played with them".

Thus the category of "playing with brothers" could easily be seen as the masked version of being occupied in sibling care.

Punishments Given

There is a marginal, non-significant difference in the punishments meted out to girls and boys. Girls and boys receive about the same type of punishment from their parents, but girls are treated more strictly with impunity. However, it must be remembered that these were reported by the girls and reflect their perceptions of what happens. There is a high probability of its being an accurate reflection of the real situation, but it would have been better had we checked it out with a similar question to the boys in the same families (Table III. 10).

Table III. 10

Punishment for Disapproved Behaviour

Type of Punishment	Percentage of Girls	Percentage of Boys
No Punishment	6.0	7.7
Scolding	58.5	50.3
Severe Beating	2.3	2.3
Scolding and Beating	29.3	25.5
Denial of Food	2.2	1.8

When punishment (broken up by gender and type) was considered in a sample of the individual centres collaborating in the study (Table III.11) we found that girls receive more punishment than boys, even though it is only marginally higher. The exception is the punishment of severe beating, which seems to be generally similar for both genders, except in the case of the Berhampur sample. In that sample, girls receive more scolding and boys receive more thrashing. Deprivation of food as a punishment is resorted to only by a small number of families, except in the Varanasi sample, where it is 61% for girls and 71% for boys.

In the "No punishment" column, the proportion of boys tends to be marginally higher. This implies that boys can get away with acts for which girls will be punished.

Rewards Given

There is no real difference in the rewards or the punishments given to girls and boys - but if there is an edge, it is in the category of "No Rewards", which has a slightly higher percentage of girls (Table III.12). These responses were given by the girls and may reflect how they perceived their own condition. Caution must be exercised in their interpretation. While acknowledging that the girl child's perceptions are important in determining whether she has a sense of being treated fairly, the counterpoint of checking these data by observation cannot be neglected.

It is important to note that "No reward" is mentioned by 43% of the girls but "No punishment" only by 6%, leaving one in no doubt that punishment is more frequently used than reward. The child's own understanding of normative behaviour has often to be inferred by her from the acts which are punished, since there are very few which are rewarded.

This point of view is supported in our study of Table III.13 on rewards for boys and girls from data collected at different centres collaborating in this study. The number of girls reporting 'No Rewards' is 86% in Tamil Nadu, 76% in Bihar, 72% in U.P. (Varanasi) and 70% in Orissa and these are the highest. It is possible to infer that these sub-cultures are harsher on the girls and less likely to be rewarding them for approved behaviour.

The findings regarding reward and punishment are supported in several studies on socialization. It is an unambiguous statement on the Indian culture (derived from several studies on socialization in Indian subcultures) that children receive punishment for wrongdoing, delay or insolence, but not equivalent reward for right action, promptness or courtesy. While bad behaviour is strongly negatively reinforced, good behaviour is not often rewarded.

Table III. 11

Punishment - Boys and Girls - Selected Samples

Location of Centre	No Punishment		Scolding		Severe Beating		Scolding & Beating		Denial of food	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
West Bengal										
Calcutta	7.3	12.8	44.0	28.5	1.3	1.5	40.7	36.5	3.8	2.8
Bihar	1.7	3.5	75.3	64.5	10.5	11.7	7.3	7.1	5.0	5.0
Delhi & U.P.	8.0	15.5	58.7	49.3	0.5	0.5	32.0	29.7	-	-
Kerala										
Trivandrum	1.0	3.3	71.7	59.0	4.7	3.5	22.5	18.7	-	-
Maharashtra										
Bombay (2)	6.7	7.5	14.3	9.0	3.0	2.2	74.2	65.0	0.3	0.5
Pune	9.7	13.0	41.3	36.3	1.0	0.8	47.6	44.5	-	-
Tamil Nadu										
Karaikudi	12.0	12.3	55.0	46.0	0.5	0.3	27.5	24.1	5.0	4.4
Orissa										
Berhampur	10.4	2.2	70.5	17.6	12.3	63.6	3.5	15.9	3.3	0.7
Uttar Pradesh										
(Eastern)										
Varanasi	-	-	-	-	-	-	38.9	17.0	61.0	71.6

All figures are in Percentages

Table III. 12

Rewards for Approved Behaviour

Type of Rewards	Girls (percent)	Boys (percent)
No Rewards	43.0	38.0
Appreciation/Praise	34.3	30.8
Cash rewards	4.1	3.8
Special food/sweets	6.0	5.6
Taken for outing (cinema)	5.9	4.1

A distinct observation concerning Indian child-rearing coming out of cross-cultural studies is the near-absence of the use of praise in socializing children. Analysis and interpretation of this observation can be found elsewhere, but briefly it is as follows: Praise is avoided for two types of reasons; one is to keep the child from being an object of envy, and to ward off the "evil eye" ("nazar" in Hindi, "kann" in Tamil) which will be cast upon the high-achieving or beautiful child by anyone around. The second major reason is the fear of self-pride, and egoism **(ahankar)** on the part of the child. There is an internalised fear of "thinking too much of oneself" that operates across regions and social classes in India. Hence praise is used sparingly by the parents.

There are no real gender differences in the kind or frequency of reward, except perhaps in the sample from Bihar (Table III. 13).

Availability of Television/Radio to Girl Children

Perhaps a comment of the times is that radio and television are available almost equally. Two decades ago, TV was a different kind of facility, available only to the privileged and wealthy in India. In those days, the transistor radio and the bicycle were generally among the first modern possessions of the peasant or industrial worker and the radio was ubiquitous. Although television came on the scene much later than the radio, it now seems to have an outreach similar to the radio. It must be noted that the question here was only whether TV/Radio was available or accessible to the girl, not whether the family owned a set.

The non-availability of TV is mentioned by only 39% compared to the 30% of the girl children who say that the radio is not accessible to them. Nevertheless, about 40% of the girl children have no access or have never had access to TV and radio, while about one-third of all of them say they use both radio and TV regularly for their entertainment. Those who are unreached or only rarely reached still constitute about 45% of the total (Table III .14).

Table III. 13

Rewards - Boys and Girls - Selected Samples

Location of Centre	No Rewards		Appreciation/ Praise		Reward in Cash small gifts/sweets		Combination of Rewards	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
West Bengal								
Calcutta	47.3	44.0	9.7	7.5	25.7	18.3	10.7	8.5
Bihar	76.1	41.7	1.5	1.5	20.6	18.7	1.7	8.2
Delhi & (U.P.)	22.7	26.0	55.8	49.7	18.5	17.6	2.0	2.0
Kerala								
Trivandrum	44.3	36.8	17.5	17.7	36.8	25.0	0.7	0.3
Maharashtra								
Bombay (2)	27.8	25.0	26.5	23.3	44.0	35.9	-	-
Pune	13.7	13.5	36.2	33.0	15.3	18.1	33.0	31.2
Orissa								
Berhampur	70.3	65.8	18.0	18.3	8.7	7.4	3.0	2.5
Tamil Nadu								
Karaikudi	85.7	75.8	10.5	9.3	3.5	2.5	0.2	0.2
Uttar Pradesh (Eastern)								
Varanasi	71.8	65.0	13.0	15.6	10.5	14.6	-	-

All figures are in percentages

Table III. 14

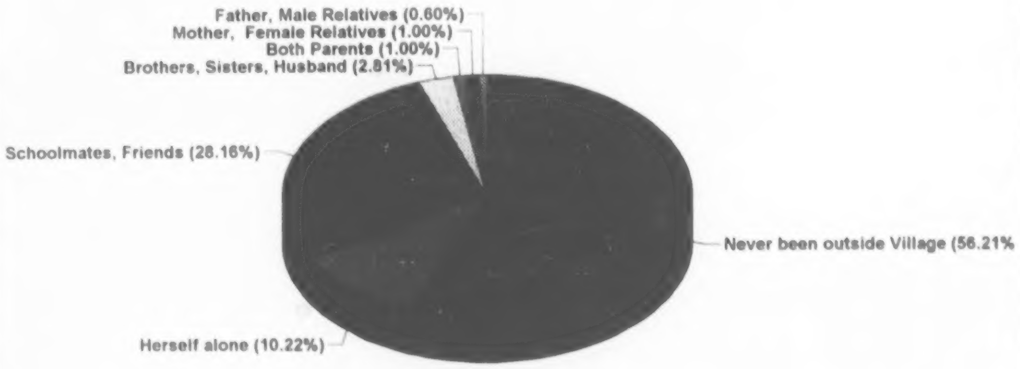
Availability of Television / Radio to Girl Children

Availability	Television	Radio
Regularly	36 . 2	36 . 4
Sometimes	16 . 6	20 . 9
Rarely	2 . 8	4 . 8
Never	4 . 8	9 . 0
Not available	39 . 0	30 . 5

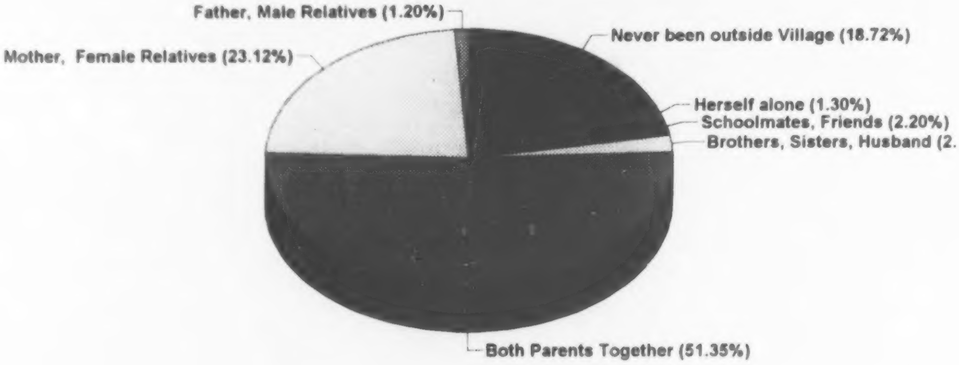
Persons Escorting the Girl Child

For any visits outside the village, the girl child is not generally permitted to go by herself. The only places she can go to unaccompanied are school (10%) and the market (around 7%). The majority of the girls do not have to go outside the village locality for schooling or for marketing. A trip outside the village for a pilgrimage, holiday or picnic is not possible for over 75% of the girls (Table III . 15).

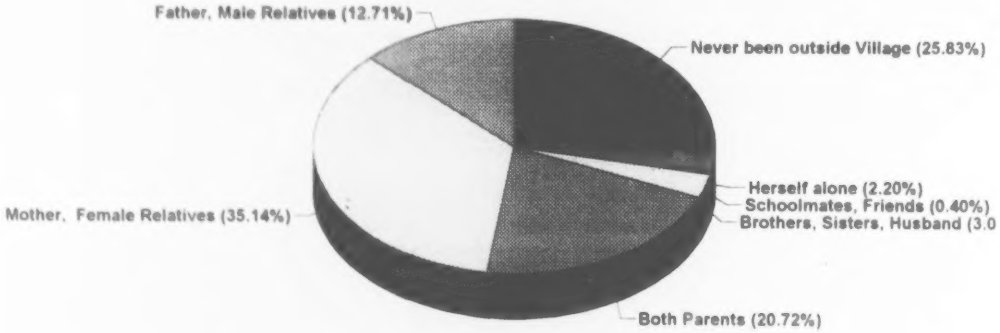
Coming to the question of the escorts that accompany the girl child, the father has a very limited role. In 13% of the cases, the father takes the daughter for medical treatment; in 35% of the cases this is done by the mother. Both parents together accompany the girl child to marriages, for family visits and festivals (Table III . 15).



S9. WHO ESCORTS THE GIRL
To School



S10. WHO ESCORTS THE GIRL
To Marriages

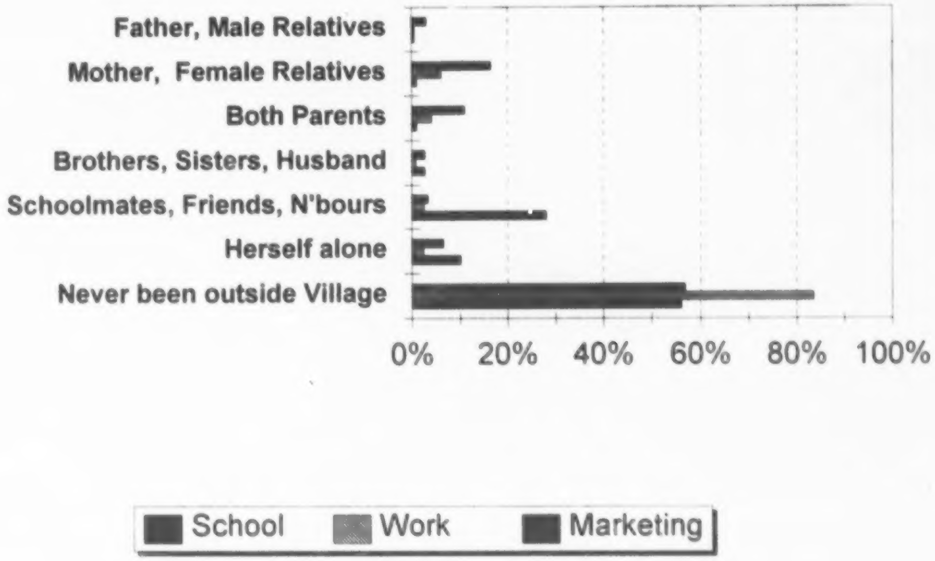


S11. WHO ESCORTS THE GIRL
For Medical Treatment

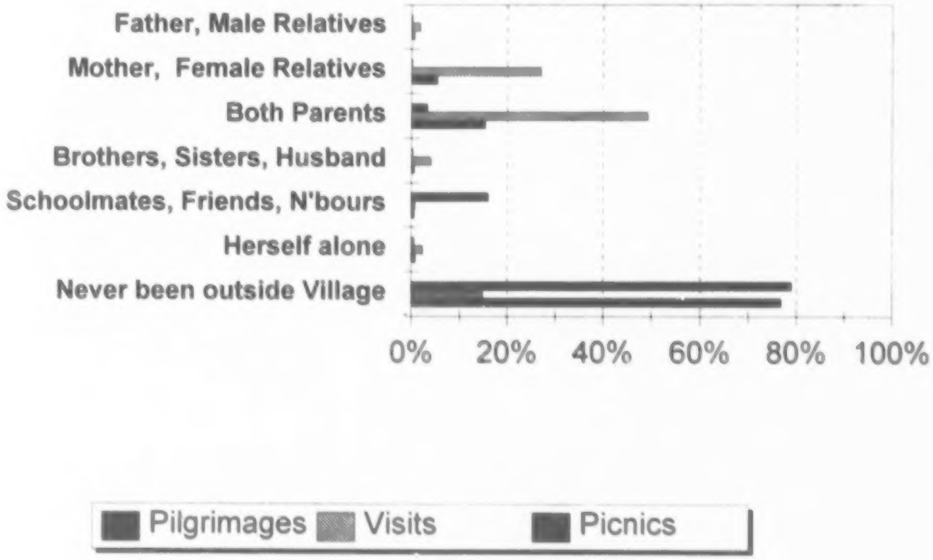
Table III. 15

Persons Escorting the Girl for Different Purposes

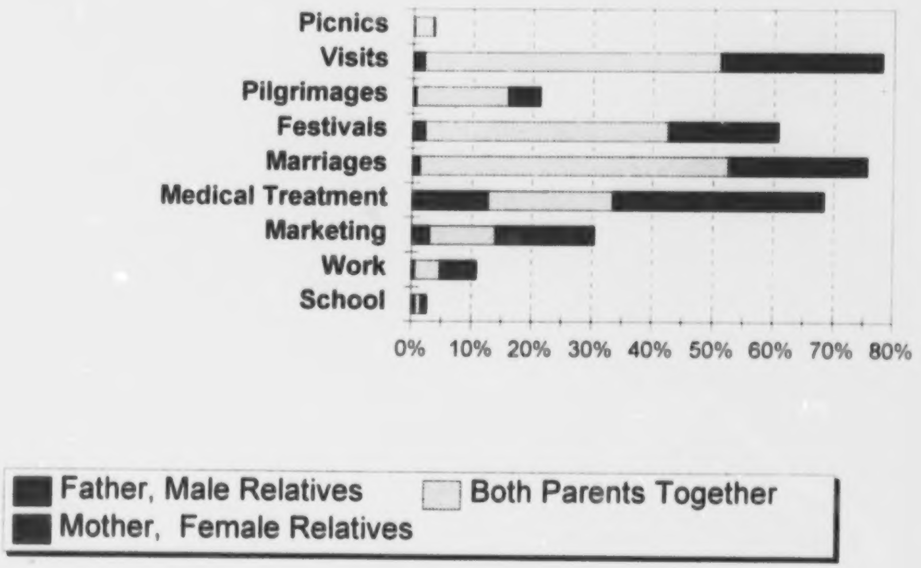
Members in the Family	School	Marriage	Work	Marketing	Med.. Treatment	Festival	Visits	Pil -grimages	Picnic
Father & other Male relatives	0.6	1.2	0.5	2.9	12.7	2.1	1.8	0.5	0.1
Mother and other female relatives	1.0	23.1	6.1	16.5	35.1	18.4	27.0	5.4	0.1
Both Parents/ Family together	1.0	51.3	4.2	11.0	20.7	40.4	49.3	15.4	3.3
Brothers/Sisters/ Husband2.8	2.1	0.8	2.8	3.0	3.4	4.0	0.6	0.2	
School mates, Neighbours/Friends	28.1	2.2	2.5	3.4	0.4	6.2	0.7	0.5	16.0
Herself/Not with any particular persons	10.2	1.3	2.4	6.6	2.2	1.2	2.3	0.8	0.6
N.A./Has Never been outside village	56.1	18.7	83.5	56.9	25.8	28.1	14.8	76.8	78.9



S12. WHO ESCORTS THE GIRL
For Different Activities



S13. WHO ESCORTS THE GIRL
For Different Activities



S14. PARENTS ESCORTING THE GIRL
For Different Activities

The mother continues to be the primary parent for the girl child, providing support, companionship and a monitoring role in most of the girl's activities. This she does either by herself or with the help of female relatives or the father. About 28% of the girls go with their friends to school, a smaller number for festivals and other outings. This however constitutes a small proportion of the total.

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Considering the number who have never been outside their village or locality for the different purposes enumerated, the sparsity of recreation, entertainment and travel in the life of a girl child becomes obvious.

Girl Child's Recreation Activities

One of the major gender differences that becomes apparent to girls as they grow up is the restriction on their freedom to move out of the house, especially for entertainment, visiting friends, seeing films and other recreational activities. Conservatism in parental dictate is confounded by poverty, which is in turn correlated with other socio-economic variables. One such factor is the level of the parents' education.

An elaboration of this relationship is seen in the table below (III . 16). Mother's level of education is seen to have an inverse relationship with the daughter's access to cinema. A parallel relationship to father's education can also be seen.

The level of education attained by mothers and fathers does have a relationship with the girl child's recreational activities, of which attending popular cinema is one. (I trust the reader realises that "cinema" here is symbolic of any visit for pleasure or fun and not to be considered as the research team's promotion of a value for popular film!).

Table III. 16

Parents' Education and Accessibility of Cinema for Daughters

	Mother		Father	
Level of Education	Proportion of total at educ. level	Percentage of girls restricted	Proportion of total at educ. level	Percentage of girls restricted
Non-literate	57 . 3	59 . 8	31 . 0	61 . 1
Primary	15 . 5	50 . 1	16 . 5	56 . 9
Middle	11 . 7	44 . 2	13 . 2	53 . 5
Higher Secondary	10 . 0	35 . 4	18 . 9	49 . 1
College and above	4 . 9	34 . 8	12 . 7	36 . 4

When the mother is educated, her level of education has more impact than the father's, but only marginally so. When the mother goes past the secondary level in education, her attitudes tend to become less conservative. Non-literate mothers are also likely to be poorer, and therefore are in need of their daughter's labour for household work and for sustenance and maintenance of the family. Even when mothers are educated upto higher secondary level or beyond, about a third of them do not permit their daughters to go to the cinema. This is a correlation, not a predictive relationship and must be understood in the context of the opportunities and life chances of each generation.

The circumscription of the Indian girl's movements outside the home have been well documented in a variety of studies. The inside/outside dichotomy is discussed even in the recent study on "Gender and Poverty" (World Bank 1992) in the context of gender. One should be surprised if restrictions on girls were not found. In general, the less educated the parents, the more likely it is that their daughter is treated as more vulnerable and therefore forbidden from moving out by herself. With the level of the father's education going up, the percentage of girls who feel restricted about going out, decreases. The relationship is linear.

Even the most educated fathers impose restrictions; even when they are educated up to college level, 37% of the girls are restricted (Table III . 17). Only about 5% of the mothers have anything like a College education or above and the proportion of girls restricted is 28% in their case. At the non-literate or even primary level, there is no effective difference between mothers and fathers in their rules for the daughters.

But when mothers reach the secondary level, they are at least 10% less strict than their husbands at the corresponding level of education. The fact of parental education also being correlated with other status variables cannot be ignored here as in other relationships that emerge.

Table III. 17

Parents' Education and Restrictions on Going out for Daughters

Level of Education	Father: Prop. of total at educ. level	Father: Percentage of girls restricted	Mother: Prop. of total at educ. level	Mother: Percentage of girls restricted
Non-literate	31 . 0	58 . 3	57 . 3	59 . 0
Primary	16 . 5	58 . 1	15 . 5	53 . 3
Middle	13 . 2	52 . 9	11 . 7	48 . 0
Higher Secondary	18 . 9	49 . 9	10 . 0	37 . 8
College and above	12 . 7	37 . 4	4 . 9	28 . 4

When a girl is seen talking to a male who is not a member of her family, and with whom she has no legitimate work, she is considered to be exceeding her brief.

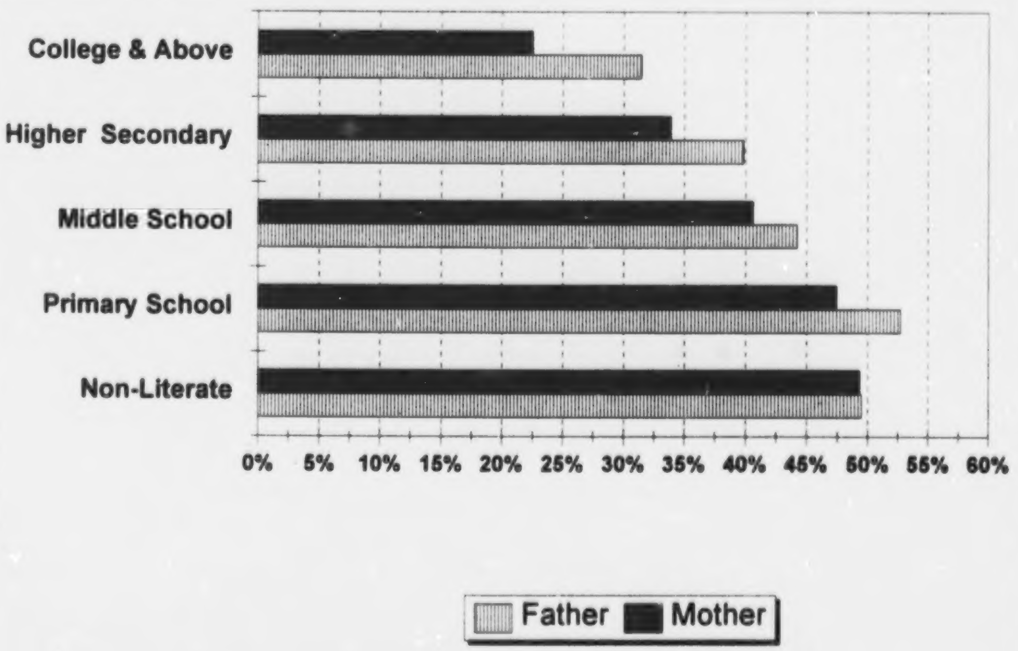
When the question was asked about restrictions on going out, 23% of the girl children reported that there were no such restrictions. Clearly these rules are gender-linked and 53% of the girls said that the parental restrictions on going out were for girls, not boys.

The correlate of "going out" is obviously meeting and talking to persons of the opposite sex. This is forbidden to girls, and 45% of the sample say that this restriction is only on girls and not boys.

Table III. 18

Parents' level of Education and Restrictions on Girls Talking to Boys

	Father		Mother	
Level of Education	Prop. of total at educ. level	Percentage of girls restricted	Prop. of total at educ. level	Percentage of girls restricted
Non-literate	31 . 0	49 . 5	57 . 3	49 . 3
Primary	16 . 5	52 . 7	15 . 5	47 . 4
Middle	13 . 2	44 . 2	11 . 7	40 . 6
Higher Secondary	18 . 9	39 . 9	10 . 0	33 . 9
College and above	12 . 7	31 . 5	4 . 9	22 . 5



S15. RESTRICTIONS ON TALKING TO BOYS
Related to Parent's Education Level

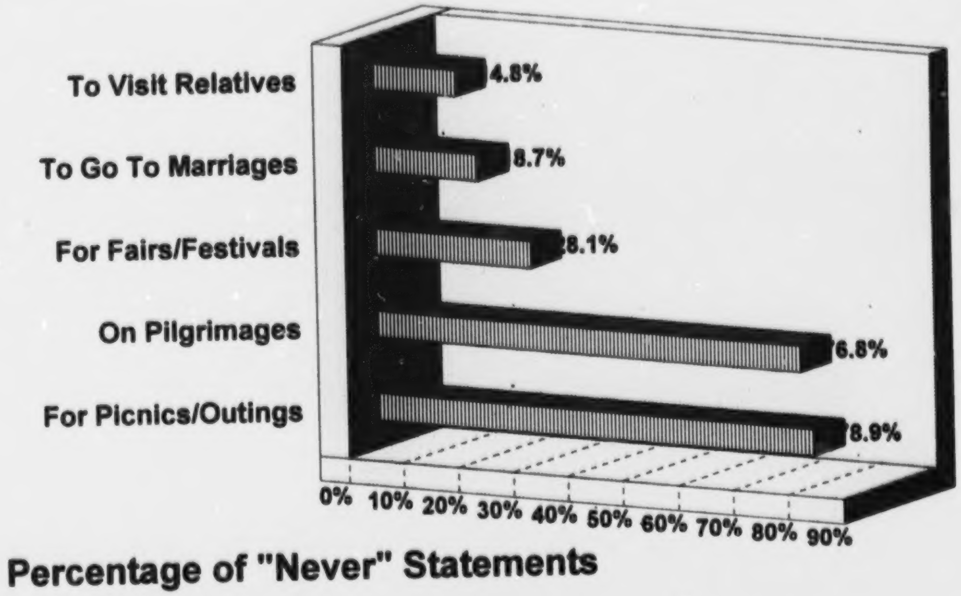
In order to keep her "reputation", the girl is forbidden from talking to boys and men. The proportion of girls reporting being restricted or feeling restrained decreases as parental level of education increases (S_{15}). Only a fifth of all the mothers who have a college education or above appear to restrict their girl children from talking with persons of the opposite sex (Table III . 18).

The table (III . 19) presented below is extracted from several tables. We asked the girl children how frequently they went outside the village for a marriage or a fair or a pilgrimage. (S_{16})

Table III. 19

Summary Table of "Never" Statements

Participation	Percentage
Never visited relatives outside village	14 . 8
Never attended marriage outside village	18 . 7
Never visited fairs/festivals elsewhere	28 . 1
Never been on a pilgrimage	76 . 8
Never been part of picnic/outing for recreation	78 . 9



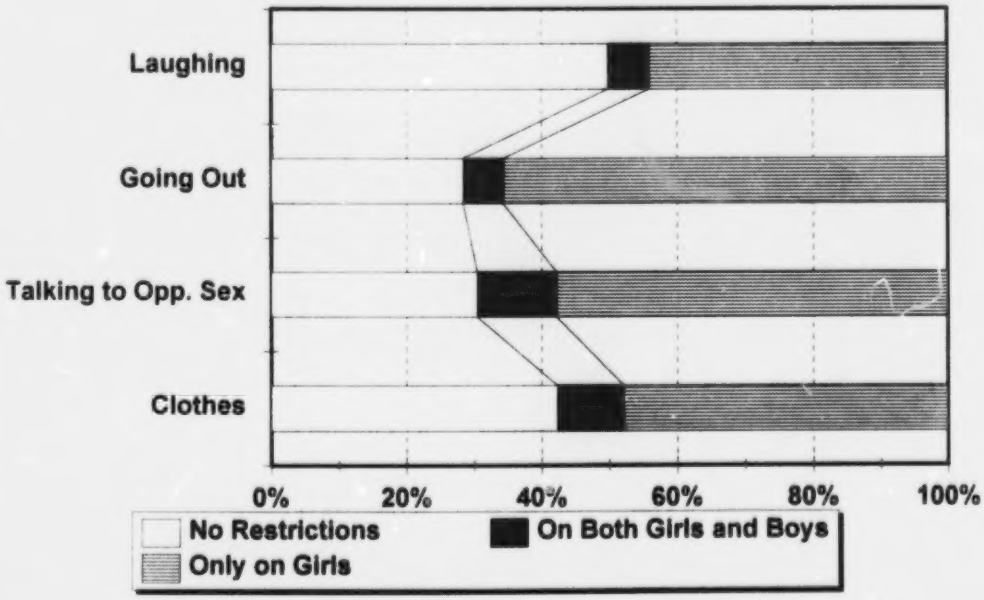
S16. GIRLS WHO NEVER LEFT THE VILLAGE
For Various Purposes

This table reveals that legitimate travelling is only for family weddings or other family functions. Fairs and festivals are occasionally a part of their activity — but even here 28% of the girls have never been outside the village to attend one. When it comes to pilgrimages, the proportion of "never" responses shoots up, till finally 79% of the girls have never been for picnics or outings.

Going out of the home is for the Indian girl the uncommon luxury, the unexpected challenge. So many of her activities are literally and metaphorically circumscribed; literally within a radius of five metres and metaphorically within the control of family codes, usually male-devised.

Restrictions on Specific Behaviours

The reasons for framing these questions must be apparent to those familiar with the socialization of girls in India. It is a piquant observation in India that girls are not allowed to laugh and boys are not allowed to cry. In other words, boys are brought up to be brave and "manly" and girls to be modest and not laugh out (not to be too attracive to the opposite sex!). In our total sample we found 41.5% reporting no restrictions on their laughing, while 36.7% said that there were restrictions only on girls and not on boys on laughing in public (Table III.20).



S17. RESTRICTIONS ON BEHAVIOUR
Related to Gender

Table III.20

Restrictions on Specific Behaviours of Girls and Boys

Restrictions	Laughing	Going out	Talking to opp. sex	Clothes
Restrictions only on girls not on boys	36 . 7	53 . 2	45 . 0	38 . 7
Restrictions on both boys and girls	5 . 0	4 . 8	9 . 1	7 . 9
No Restrictions	41 . 5	23 . 0	23 . 7	34 . 2

On going out, 53% of the girls report that the restrictions are on them, but not on the boys. About 23% say that there are no restrictions. On the other variables, wearing non-traditional clothes or talking to the opposite sex, there is no doubt about gender differences and the bias against the social freedom permitted to girls.

However, the most unambiguous picture is derived from the differences in the restrictions on boys and girls that can be seen in this table (III.21). The restriction on boys (for the same acts) is generally felt by 1% or less. It is a telling comment on society that talking to the opposite sex is forbidden for 40 to 80% of the girls, while for boys the range is from 0 . 2% to 4 . 6%. Some questions were not asked directly or at least not recorded for the purposes of coding and quantification, but it seems highly possible that if a girl and boy are caught going out together or talking to each other, the repercussions for the girl would be harsher. She would probably receive severe punishment or ostracism for the "crime"!

There is no specific pattern emerging from the disaggregated data that was not already evident from the total sample. It is not clear what the reasons are for the way the groups differ. For instance, in the example picked here, the group of girls in Gujarat seems to feel most restricted on going out, wearing non-traditional clothes and talking to boys (Table III.21). The samples from Pune and Berhampore fall next in restrictions on the same domains. These observations, however, would not warrant any hasty conclusions on sub-cultural or inter-regional differences.

Table III. 21

Restriction on Specific Behaviours of Girls and Boys - Selected Samples

Location of Centre	Laughing		Expressing Emotions		Going out		Talking to Opp. Sex.		Clothing		Marketing and going out to cinema	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
Andhra Pradesh Guntur	36.8	0.2	14.0	0.5	45.1	-	40.8	0.5	35.3	-	19.1	0.5
West Bengal Calcutta	40.0	0.2	13.4	0.3	55.3	0.3	37.0	0.2	13.5	-	28.0	0.3
Delhi & U.P	55.1	1.0	17.6	0.5	52.0	0.6	37.1	0.6	48.8	0.8	14.1	1.0
Gujarat Ahmedabad	15.0	1.0	68.7	3.7	85.5	2.0	83.3	4.6	82.5	-	37.8	1.3
Maharashtra Pune	-	-	46.5	0.8	66.6	1.7	49.2	0.5	62.2	1.0	51.0	0.7
Orissa Berhampur	47.0	0.1	25.2	0.2	61.0	-	50.3	0.4	48.8	0.1	44.0	0.1

Table III. 22

Qualities of a Good Girl, Wife and Daughter-in-law

Quality	Girl	Wife	Daughter-in-law
Educationally Accomplished	21.9	2.4	-
Good Job/Earning well	0.9	0.7	2.7
Good looking/smart well-dressed	4.7	1.9	3.8
Well-mannered/well-behaved	18.2	12.8	15.9
Respectful, obedient, modest	18.5	8.8	15.9
Sharing responsibility	3.4	8.8	9.6
Adjustable/sociable	1.6	6.5	6.3
Good household work/cooking	11.2	15.1	13.9
Don't know/Can't say	8.7	23.9	18.6
Healthy	0.3	-	-
Intelligent	2.4	-	-
Wealthy/good family	0.6	-	-
Affectionate/loving spouse	-	9.5	2.1

Admired Qualities

Questions concerning the qualities of a good girl, a good wife and a good daughter-in-law were asked to all the girl children. Despite the inherent problems in questionnaire data of this type, quantified on the basis of the coding developed for open ended categories, the method appears to have drawn out the genuine responses of the girl children. Just one look at the category "educationally accomplished" which is mentioned by 22% of the girls and is the most frequently reported trait of a "good girl", is mentioned by 2.4% as the quality for a good wife and it drops out entirely in the qualities mentioned of a good daughter-in-law (Table III . 22).

The qualities admired in a girl may have no value when she becomes a wife and a daughter-in-law. It follows that the traits a girl wishes to have when she is in school and unmarried, may become irrelevant in her marital state. To be a student and to be educationally accomplished evokes the admiration of one's .peers; but when the girl's role changes to that of wife and daughter-in-law, education is no longer seen to be relevant.

Table III.23

Expectation of Approved behaviour in Boys and Girls: Selected Samples

Location of Centre	Modest, Helpful and Cooperative Behaviour	
	Girls	Boys
Andhra Pradesh		
Telengana	46.5	41.7
Guntur	37.3	32.3
West Bengal		
Calcutta	40.0	31.7
Delhi & (U.P.)	48.8	36.8
Kerala		
Trivandrum	65.9	69.6
Maharashtra		
Bombay (1)	77.1	47.0
Pune	54.4	42.2
Orissa		
Berhampur	51.3	39.4
Uttar Pradesh (Eastern)		
Varanasi	62.8	44.2

For most of the other traits, the differences are not so dramatic: it is apparent that some girl children are shy or hesistant to mention the qualities of a good wife with the "Don't know/Can't say" category getting 24%. In the case of mentioning the traits of a good daughter-in-law, 18.6% girls were unwilling to commit themselves, or perhaps unable to mention specific traits (III . 22).

Being respectful and modest is a relevant trait for all categories but is more frequently mentioned for the girl child than for a wife or daughter-in-law; and conversely, sharing responsibility is more clearly seen as a trait valued after marriage.

Behaviour which is helpful, cooperative and modest receives social approval at most levels. However, it is clearly expected that girls will develop this cluster of traits. For the boys, the expectation is lower in all the samples, except in Kerala. Even the traits that are most valuable for all human relationships get subtly linked with gender and become feminine attributes (Table III . 23).

Since helpfulness and modesty are included in the traits admired in women, the proportion of girls is higher than the proportion of boys for each corresponding trait. It also appears that these traits cut across development levels and regions, as there is no specific relationship between proportion of girls in school or any other variable that can be considered a correlate for the value for cooperative behaviour. The fact that there is no relationship between this value and any developmental aspect can be seen from the table which has data from nine collaborating centres (Table III . 23).

Ideal Age of Marriage for Boys and Girls : Mother's Perspective

The mothers were asked their opinion on the ideal age of marriage for boys and girls.

Table III. 24

Ideal Age of Marriage for Boys and Girls : Mother's Perspective

Age of Marriage	Girls	Boys
Whenever they want	0.3	1.6
Before the age of 8 years	0.3	0.2
Between 8-12 years	3.7	0.2
Between 12-15 years	12.7	1.2
Between 15-18 years	33.1	6.9
Between 18-22 years	37.0	32.3
Between 22-25 years	—	30.7
Above 22 years	7.6	—
Above 25 years	—	22.5
D.K./No idea/Never thought of it/ When the proposal comes	2.6	2.1
N.A.	2.7	2.4

From the above table (III . 24) we can see that in the case of the girls, about 50% of the mothers felt that the girl should be married by the age of 18 years. Of this, 33 . 1% felt the ideal age was between 15 - 18 years of age and it becomes clear that for at least half the families in the sample, the official age for the girls marriage at 18 + is later than they want. And 37% felt that 18 - 22 years constituted the ideal age.

In the case of the boys, 63% of the mothers felt that the ideal age for a boy to marry was between the ages of 18 and 25 years. About 22 . 5% felt that boys should marry after the age of 25 years.

Gender Differences

From the perspective of the girls, literacy and family occupation are important for boys, but only 10% say that literacy is for boys only and about 30% that family occupation is for boys only. About 70% of the girls feel that literacy is important for both boys and girls and 18.5% put family occupation in this category. Skills which are stereotypically considered feminine have predictably less than 5% responses in the category of "Both boys and girls".

Where there seems to be almost no doubt is in the response that cooking is a skill that girls must acquire (87%) and about 48% put sewing in this category. About two-thirds to three-fourths of the girls are not sure about the importance of music and dance — probably because opportunities to acquire skill in these areas are simply non-existent. As for family occupation, many do not have a traditional family occupation, and hence almost half the sample of girls admit to not being sure of the expectation of acquiring skills in it (Table III . 25).

Table III. 25

Girls' Report on Skills Expected to be Acquired

Skills	Boys only	Girls only	Both Boys and Girls	Not Sure/ Don't know
Literacy	10.0	6.5	70.5	12.0
Cooking	0.2	87.3	5.3	6.3
Music	1.1	19.1	—	68.6
Dance	0.8	18.7	3.9	74.2
Sewing	0.6	47.8	4.3	45.4
Family Occupation	29.7	3.8	18.5	45.1

There is a clear relationship (Table III . 26) between the proportion of girls attending school and the proportion of girls who say that both boys and girls need to acquire literacy. The importance for equal literacy is the highest in Kerala and Maharashtra

Table III. 26

Girls' Report on Literacy Skills expected to be Acquired - Selected Samples

Location of Centre	Both Boys and Girls
Andhra Pradesh	
Coastal	63.3
Bihar	67.3
Delhi & (U.P.)	74.8
Kerala	
Trivandrum	96.7
Maharashtra	
Bombay (2)	87.7
Pune	86.2
Orissa	
Berhampur	59.6
Uttar Pradesh	
Varanasi	64.2

and lowest in A.P. and U.P. These figures reflect an actuality. Likewise, there is a tendency for the girls from communities with a high proportion of girls in school to state that cooking should be acquired by both boys and girls Table (III . 27), though the gender component in the comparison of literacy skills with cooking skills cannot be ignored.

Over 60% of the girls say they have no skills, since they are socialized into believing that all the tasks they do are unskilled jobs. (Table III . 28) Among the skills identified, sewing skills rate the highest, with food processing to follow. Other skills probably include sports and related activities.

The mother is the most relevant teacher of skills to the daughters partly because the identified skills are also somewhat stereotypes of what women can and must do. Schools and training centres rate next, followed by friends and neighbours. It is ironic that less than 7% of the girls feel that they pick up any skills at school.

Table III. 27

Gender Differences in Cooking Skills - Selected Samples

Location of Centre	Girls only	Both Boys & Girls
Andhra Pradesh		
Coastal	90 . 3	4 . 3
Guntur	62 . 7	—
Delhi & (U. P.)	55 . 3	33 . 8
Kerala		
Trivandrum	78 . 5	18 . 8
Maharashtra		
Bombay (2)	96 . 7	0 . 3
Pune	73 . 8	21 . 0
Orissa		
Berhampur	80 . 8	6 . 0
Uttar Pradesh		
Varanasi	97 . 1	2 . 6

Table III. 28

Skills of the Girl Child

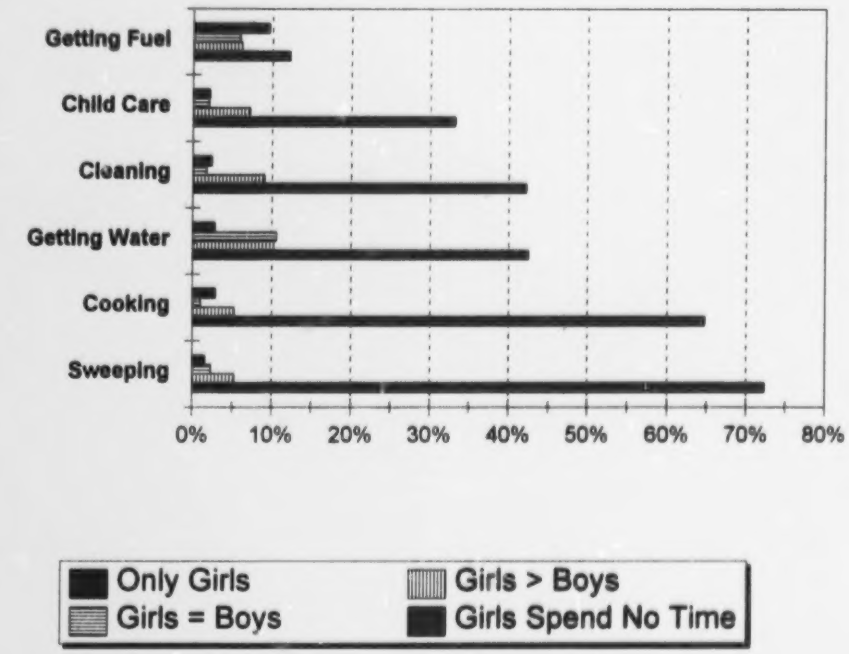
Skills	Percent
No Skill	61.3
Stitching / Embroidery / Knitting	16.8
Cooking / Food Processing	7.7
Household occupation	2.8
Fine arts	3.1
Other skills (sports, etc.)	8.4

Judging by the data in Table III.29 the term "skill" has been interpreted in many ways. While 94.5% of the girls in Kerala say they have no skill, only 25.3% in Pune say the same. If would be instructive for the methodologist to examine the term or terms which are the translations of "skill" in the different languages represented in this sample. This is apart from taking into account the investigator-variable, i.e. that some researchers are able to get better data than others. Having allowed for both semantic and training differentials, there are some points to note. Fathers have almost no role in teaching any skill to their daughters, but the mother's role is a major one in this context. Friends and neighbours are just as important as family members (another indicator that the "extended family" may include other than kinsfolk).

Table III. 29

From whom Skills Learnt - Selected Samples

Location of Centre	No Skill	Father	Mother	Family members	Friends, neighbours	School, Coaching Centre	Self taught
Total Sample	61.5	1.1	18.5	3.7	5.5	6.5	3.1
Delhi & U.P	56.5	1.0	16.6	8.6	14.3	3.7	—
Kerala							
Trivandrum	94.5	0.2	1.0	0.2	2.0	2.1	—
Orissa							
Berhampur	80.5	0.4	7.7	1.7	3.4	3.8	2.5
Maharashtra							
Pune	25.3	2.0	29.8	0.8	7.8	19.0	14.8
Eastern							
Uttar Pradesh							
Varanasi	—	0.6	56.9	6.9	12.9	5.6	16.2



S18. GENDER DIVISION OF DOMESTIC TASKS

Table III. 30
Gender Division of Domestic Tasks

Domestic Tasks	Only girls spend time not boys	Girls spend more time than boys	Girls spend no time at all	Girls and boys spend equal time
Fuel	12.2	6.1	9.6	5.9
Fodder	4.9	3.0	7.4	3.2
Water	42.5	10.3	2.8	10.6
Cattle	6.8	3.3	6.3	4.1
Cooking	64.8	5.2	2.9	1.0
Child Care	33.2	7.2	2.1	2.0
Sweeping	72.3	5.2	1.6	2.3
Errands	11.0	2.9	14.1	14.6
Marketing	8.0	1.2	22.7	8.3
Floor Care	25.9	1.7	4.6	2.4
Garden	5.0	0.9	2.7	1.5
Grazing	2.1	0.7	8.0	1.8
Home Industry	1.9	0.3	2.3	0.6
Agriculture	2.9	0.4	7.1	3.4
Selling	0.9	0.1	7.2	0.5
Cleaning	42.3	9.0	2.4	1.8
Churning Butter	9.4	0.4	2.5	0.1

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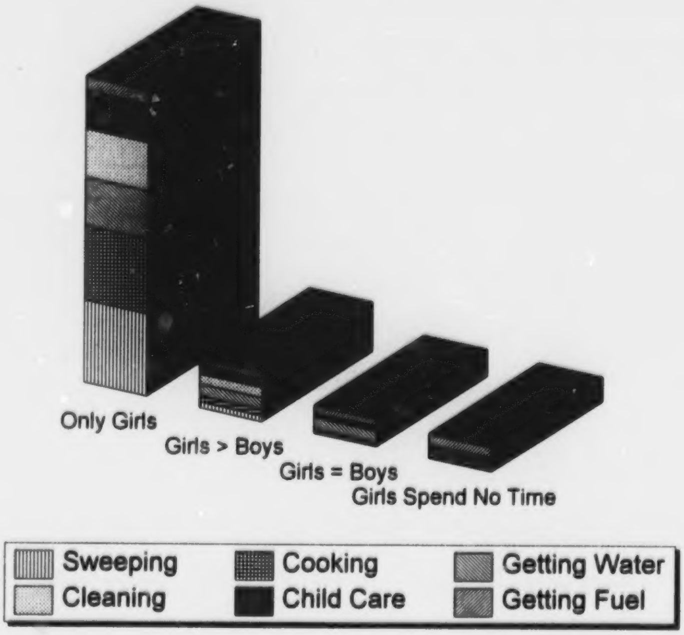

S19. GENDER DIVISION OF DOMESTIC TASKS

A look at the domestic tasks and the proportion of girls involved in them reveals the nature of the gender orientation of the various tasks (S18, S19). For instance, when one considers child care/sibling care, 33% say that only girls spend time, 7% that girls spend more time than boys and 2% each that girls spend no time at all and boys and girls spend equal time. These figures constitute a diffused picture of the girl's role in sibling care. If only 2% spend no time at all, it stands to reason that almost all the others who have young siblings will have something to do with their care. But as we know from some field notes, some sibling care is labelled as "playing with brothers" or keeping younger brothers amused (Table III . 30).

If one runs down the column "only girls spend time" (not boys), we notice that sweeping is the gender stereotypic domestic task that rates the highest proportion, with cooking as the second. Fetching water and cleaning the house rate third in proportion of responses from the sample. This column must be studied in parallel with Col.4 (both boys and girls spend equal time) and we see that 2% spend time sweeping, 1% cooking, and 10 . 6% fetching water. These present another angle on the same data.

What women activists and scholars have been saying for years is that gender attitudes and gender divisions of work are overarchingly dominant, cutting across social class, caste and region. The data support this point of view entirely.

Chapter IV

EDUCATION

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Chapter IV

EDUCATION

Introduction

Everyone is familiar with the global slogan "Education for all by the year 2000". Implementing this is a mandate for the Government; the rapid increase of primary school facilities and their extension to the remotest village and hamlet is a categorical imperative.

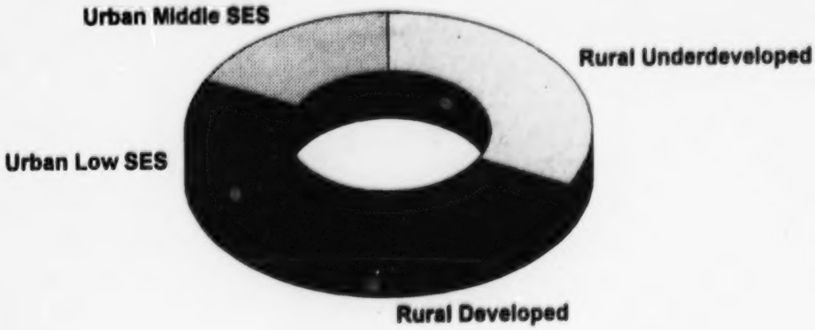
Education is an umbrella term to convey many things - literacy, numeracy, school attendance, peer relationships in a formal setting and so on. When children attend school for a few years, they are considered "educated", even though it is widely known that just being in school does not automatically ensure that children receive a real education. Recent evaluations of the education at the primary level have uncovered gross deficiencies that have a sobering effect on one's optimism. Nevertheless, the conviction persists that it is better for children to attend primary school than not, and that schooling, however inadequate, has some positive effects on child development. These effects are even more perceptible in the case of girls.

Schools generally reflect the characteristics of society. They have partial segregation within the classrooms on the basis of gender, a curriculum reflecting patriarchal values and a male-dominated teachers' team. However, even these factors do not wholly suppress the value of the school experience for girls.

School is still a place where good behaviour, attentiveness, responding to questions alertly, being helpful, and developing subject matter competence are positively reinforced. On all these aspects, girls tend to be equal to, if not ahead of, boys. Hence, they get immediate rewards. A reward may be no more than a nod of approval from the teacher. Children are able to convert these trace elements of courtesy into the components of self-esteem and self-confidence. Any positive reinforcement from the teacher thus adds to the girl child's scarce opportunities for a sense of achievement.

This preamble is to emphasize the concept that, for the purposes of this study, school attendance in itself is relevant. Therefore a number of aspects of the life of the girl child are studied through the lens of schooling.

In the planning of the study a number of demographic details have also been selected which are related to the issue of girls' education. These details have been considered here in this section.



E1. PROPORTION OF TYPES OF AREA
In the Sample

The development index was intrinsic to the sampling design. The districts selected were to be from two ends of the distribution, from the first and fourth quartiles to be exact. In other words, the rural areas were stratified according to level of development. A district with a high development index (top 25% according to the CMIE) and a district with a low development index (bottom quartile according to the CMIE) were identified. From each of these, two villages were selected; one with high literacy and the other with low literacy.

Two levels of rural development were thus built into the sampling design, as has already been described in detail in the chapter on Household Profile. Two-thirds of the entire sample was rural. Two levels of urban families, lower SES and lower middle SES were selected for the urban sample.

Information from 20 of the participating research teams constitute the quantified data presented here. Two of the teams were late with their data, but their descriptions and qualitative data have been included.

The first area of inquiry concerned school attendance of girl children (Table IV.1).

Table IV.1

School Attendance of Girls (7-18 Years) N = 12000

School Attendance	Number of girl children	Proportion of the total
Attending School	7373	61 . 4
Dropped out	2082	17 . 4
Never Attended School	2541	21 . 2

The percentage of girls attending is 61%. A little more than 20% of all the girls never went to school, while those who have attended school and dropped out constitute 17% of the sample of 12000 girls.

When the total sample is broken up into Rural and Urban, the following distribution (Table IV . 2) can be seen in the school attendance figures of the girls.

As one would have predicted from available data, there is a clear urban-rural divide in the proportion of girl children attending school and in the proportion of those who never attended. The urban sample has 18% more girls in school than the rural; conversely, the rural sample has 13% more girls who never attended school.

Table IV.2

Girls' School Attendance in Rural and Urban Areas

Sample	Now attending	Dropped out	Never attended
Total Sample (N=12000)	61 . 4	17 . 4	21 . 2
Rural Sample (N=8000)	55 . 7	18 . 7	25 . 6
Urban Sample (N=4000)	73 . 9	14 . 6	12 . 4

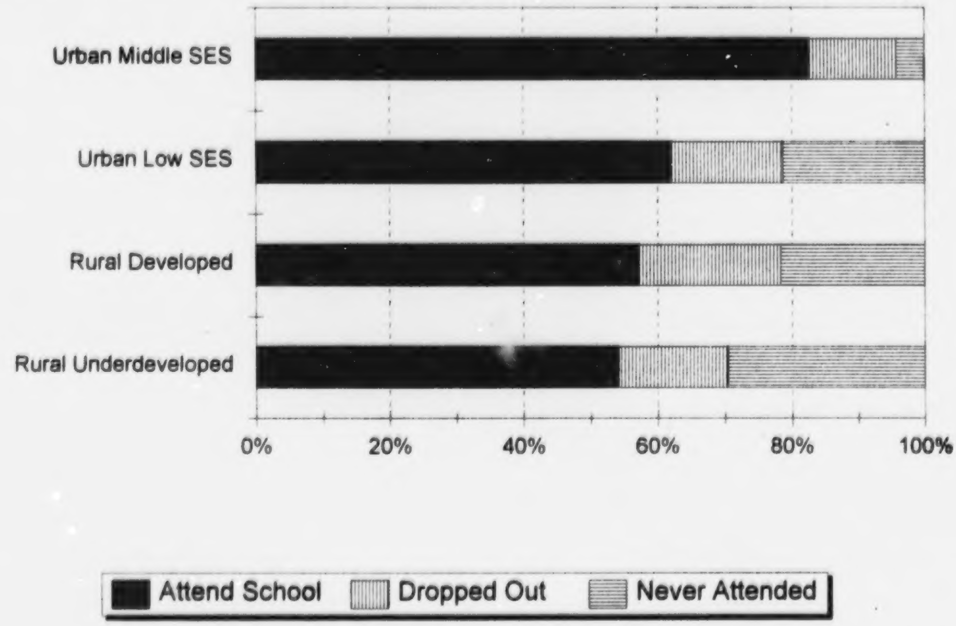
A predictable linear relationship can be seen, with the rural sample having a smaller proportion in school and a larger proportion out of school in comparison to the urban. Further, the rural developed district had data that showed a slight improvement in the quantum of girls getting an education. The low SES urban area has 62% girl children in school and 21% who never attended, closely approximating the mean of the total sample. The urban middle SES, which constituted 17.6% of the total sample (with the cities including Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Pune, Chandigarh and Mysore among others) had 82.5% of the girl children in school and only 4.4% who never attended (Table IV . 3).

Table IV.3

School Attendance of Girls according to Type of District/Area

District/ Area	Proportion of the total sample	Percentage Attending School	Percentage Dropped out	Percentage Never Attended School
Rural low level of development	32 . 8	54 . 2	16 . 2	29 . 6
Rural high level of development	33 . 8	57 . 1	21 . 2	21 . 7
Urban low SES	15 . 8	62 . 1	16 . 4	21 . 4
Urban middle SES	17 . 6	82 . 5	13 . 1	4 . 4

The reasons for the rural-urban difference are known ones: differential access to school, varying value for schooling and the situational imperative of engaging the girl child in household chores, like fetching water and fuel, as well as for sibling care. These aspects become clear as the study progresses and this preliminary discussion must be seen as merely setting the stage.



E2. SCHOOL ATTENDANCE OF GIRLS RELATED TO TYPE OF AREA

The level of literacy of the area would certainly be an important antecedent of the education of girls. If parents themselves are even minimally educated, they are more likely to get their children educated in the formal system. Even non-literate parents appear to recognize the value of education for their girl children as the data indicate, but parental attendance of school does make a clear difference to their educating their children. The table that follows elaborates the quantitative relationship between literacy level of the area and girl children in school (Table IV . 4).

Table IV.4

Literacy Level of the Area and School Attendance of Girls

Literacy Levels	Now Attending	Dropped out	Never attended
Low	55 . 3	18 . 7	26 . 0
High	67 . 8	16 . 0	16 . 2

Next, we study the caste break-up of the sample and then the percentage of girls in each caste not attending school. Here we see that there is an unambiguous relationship between the caste hierarchy and the percentage of girls who never attended school (Table IV . 5).

Table IV.5

Relationship of Caste to Girls' Non-Attendance of School

Caste	Number of girls	Percentage of caste groups in the entire sample	Percentage of girls never attended school
Brahmin	914	7 . 6	4
Forward	3332	27 . 8	15
Backward	3825	31 . 9	28
SC	2430	20 . 3	34
ST	683	5 . 7	41
Others	792	6 . 6	23

Starting with 4% among the Brahmins and 15% in the Forward Castes, it gradually increases as we go to Backward Caste and Scheduled Castes, to 41% in Scheduled Tribes. In the last row, 'others' refers to those outside this specific category system, including persons from other religions, not falling under a caste system. Interpretation of this finding must take into account the sociological fact that caste does not operate in isolation, but as part of a complex cluster of socio-economic variables.

The next category to consider as a case of not attending school is that of religious group affiliation.

Sikh and Christian families appear to be ensuring the school attendance of their daughters more thoroughly than Hindus and Muslims. The flip side of the coin is the proportion of girls from each group who were never in school. This particular statistic does seem to support the thesis that the socio-cultural factors inherent to being a member of a religious group do serve as salient antecedents to the family's behaviour (Table IV . 6).

Table IV.6

Religion and Girls' School Attendance

Religion	Proportion of the total sample	Percentage entering school	Percentage never in school
Hindu	85 . 5	75 . 2	24 . 8
Muslim	7 . 3	71 . 5	28 . 5
Christian	2 . 5	93 . 4	6 . 6
Sikh	2 . 6	96 . 8	3 . 2
Other religions	2 . 1	78 . 9	21 . 1

The sample consisted of girls between 7 and 18 years and they were in classes ranging from Nursery to College. We know, of course, that sometimes children are sent to school only when they are able to go out on their own, and not necessarily at age 5. Some children are therefore in Nursery or Standard I at seven years of age. From Standard 2 to 10 there is an approximately even number in each class level. The sample covered the entire age range of 7-18 years and the range of classes from I to XII rather uniformly.

The next variable was the type of school: co-educational or single sex (Table IV . 7). Only 18% of the total sample attended single-sex schools; out of this lot, about one-fifth dropped out. Out of the 60% entering co-educational schools, a little more than one-fifth dropped out. The difference in the type of school is only marginal, yet it could be an important factor for girls who are above the age of puberty. One fact to be remembered is that most villages generally have only one school and boys and girls attend this. The opportunity of attending a girls' school is probably enjoyed by girl children in the urban areas.

It is most likely that the girls' schools in this survey were from the urban areas, where large schools operate separate shifts for boys and girls, or where fee-paying girls' schools are available and are sought by parents as a channel for upward mobility for their children.

Table IV.7

Type of School and Attendance

Type of School	Total percentage entering school	Percentage now attending	Percentage dropped out
Co-educational	60 . 3	76 6	23 . 2
Girl's School	18 . 3	82 . 8	17 . 1

One of the conclusions to be drawn from this set of data is that there is no direct relationship between number of girl children in school and availability of girls' schools.

Table IV.8

Percentage of Girls Attending Co-educational and Girls' Schools:
Selected Samples

Location of Centre and percentage of girls in school		Percentage of Students in Co-educational Schools	Percentage of Students in Girls' Schools
Andhra Pradesh			
Telangana	(63 . 3)	75 . 0	23 . 6
Guntur	(60 . 5)	99 . 1	0 . 8
West Bengal			
Calcutta	(65 . 1)	67 . 9	31 . 1
Delhi (& UP)	(60 . 5)	69 . 9	30 . 1
Gujarat			
Baroda	(69 . 5)	83 . 2	16 . 8
Karnataka			
Mysore	(67 . 5)	87 . 9	12 . 1
Kerala			
Trivandrum	(85 . 7)	70 . 8	28 . 7
Maharashtra			
Bombay (2)	(85 . 8)	94 . 0	6 . 0
Pune	(65 . 5)	82 . 4	17 . 6
Tamil Nadu			
Karaikudi	(67 . 3)	83 . 5	16 . 5
Uttar Pradesh (Eastern)			
Varanasi	(50 . 2)	79 . 2	20 . 8

We see here (Table IV.8) that in Trivandrum, Calcutta and Delhi, a fairly noticeable proportion (29 - 31%) of girl children were attending girls' schools, but the total percentage attending school does not seem to have been influenced by this factor.

It is too simple to treat attending a girls' school as a status variable. On studying the break-up of Co-education vs. Single Sex Schools in selected locations, it becomes clear that school attendance per se is not influenced by the availability of a girls' school. In Bombay where 6% attend girls' schools and in Kerala where 28% attend girls' schools the school attendance is 85% (the highest proportion in our sub-samples).

For at least half of all the girl children, the school was within reach, in the same locality (Table IV.9).

Table IV.9

Location of School and School Attendance

Locality	Proportion of the total entering school	Percentage attending school	Percentage dropped out
In Village/locality	50 . 6	76 . 0	23 . 9
Within 2 km.	21 . 1	81 . 5	18 . 3
From 2 - 5 km.	6 . 9	82 . 7	17 . 2

Of these, almost a quarter dropped out. Of the 21% girls who had a school within 2 km, 81% attended school and 18% dropped out. Approximately the same proportion can be seen among the girls whose school was 2-5 kms. away.

A large majority of the sample (71%) said that there was no problem in walking to school (out of them 78% attended school and 22% were dropouts). Altogether only 7% of the girls mentioned problems of bad weather, their own ill health or a feeling of insecurity. However, even these girls did continue to attend school in approximately the same proportions. A look into a few specific examples from the sub-samples gives the textural details that characterize this study (Table IV . 10).

One can conclude that a reasonable distance from school is not in itself a factor in the number who attend. Children who walk a little further to attend school may invest more effort and hence have more value for school education. In any case, there is no direct relationship between distance of school from home and girls' attendance. Distance being a factor in children never attending school may be treated as likely — but that specific aspect was not investigated in this study. As with all the other variables, poverty and economic marginality tend to be strong as determinants in all major outcomes.

Table IV. 10

Distance of School from Home : Selected Samples

Location of Centre	Percentage of total attending School	Within Village/ Locality	Under 2 kms.	2-5 kms.	More than 5 Kms.
Andhra Pradesh					
Telangana	63 . 3	60 . 9	26 . 7	9 . 9	2 . 8
West Bengal					
Calcutta	65 . 1	54 . 9	31 . 0	8 . 3	5 . 2
Delhi & (U.P)	60 . 5	46 . 1	41 . 1	12 . 1	- -
Gujarat					
Baroda	69 . 5	63 . 5	19 . 3	16 . 0	1 . 2
Kerala					
Trivandrum	85 . 7	53 . 3	26 . 2	19 . 8	0 . 3
Maharashtra					
Bombay (1)	65 . 5	54 . 8	31 . 3	5 . 3	10 . 3
Bombay (2)	85 . 8	75 . 0	14 . 6	8 . 3	2 . 7
Pune	65 . 5	65 . 7	23 . 0	9 . 1	0 . 2
Uttar Pradesh (Eastern)					
Varanasi	50 . 2	52 . 4	34 . 0	7 . 8	5 . 8

One indicator of the strong desire to educate girls may be the willingness of families to allow the girl child to stay in a hostel or with friends of the family, in order to be close to a school. It was found that less than 20% of the total sample stay with relatives or friends or in a hostel. Almost all the children who attend school stay in their own homes.

Table IV. 11

Medium of Instruction of the Girl Children

Medium of Instruction	Percentage of the total
Mother tongue only	56 . 2
Regional language (not mother tongue)	13 . 1
Mother tongue and one other language	1 . 8
English	6 . 8

Since about one-third of the total sample is from urban areas including the metropolitan areas of Bombay, Delhi and Calcutta, the question of medium of instruction offers more variety than would be expected in monocultural areas (Table IV.11).

Table IV. 12

Medium of Instruction in School

Selected Samples

Location of Centre	Percentage Attending School	Mother tongue only	Regional language (Not girl child's mother tongue)	English
Andhra Pradesh				
Coastal	50 . 0	85 . 0	4 . 3	9 . 8
West Bengal				
Calcutta	65 . 1	78 . 5	4 . 7	14 . 5
Delhi (& U.P.)	60 . 5	53 . 5	44 . 5	1 . 7
Kerala				
Trivandrum	85 . 7	80 . 8	0 . 3	17 . 8
Maharashtra				
Bombay (2)	85 . 8	87 . 7	3 . 0	6 . 1
Pune	65 . 5	81 . 4	4 . 4	11 . 9
Orissa				
Berhampur	54 . 0	73 . 9	16 . 7	3 . 2
Tamil Nadu				
Karaikudi	67 . 3	82 . 8	--	11 . 6

The use of English as medium by almost 7% is definitely evidence of an upwardly mobile lower class in both rural and urban areas (Table IV . 11).

Selected instances from the studies undertaken as part of this project are presented in Table IV . 12 : the proportion of English medium schools in the different locations of our sample is quite revealing. Trivandrum has the highest number of girls in English medium schools followed by Calcutta.

While the language in which children are schooled has implications for their future academic and professional careers, and while English may be perceived as the key to advancement, this study has not gone into the details of the reasons for the choice of type of school. Our interpretations in this regard, may be considered no more than intelligent guesses.

Most extra-curricular activities are beyond the reach of the girl child, or she does not participate. We should consider the access to school amenities in the context of their scarce availability.

Continuing the description of the schooling experience for our sample of girl children from around the country, we consider the question of the girls taking part in the extra curricular activities available in the schools. Very few girls take part in anything other than games (which 50% of the girls say they participate in). Not more than 20% take part in music and dance and the other activities are negligible. The resounding "No" from a large majority of the girls for such questions tells its own story (Table IV . 13).

Table IV. 13

Participation of Girls in Extra-curricular Activities

Activities	Yes	No
Games	49 . 3	29 . 3
Dramatics/Debates	13 . 4	65 . 0
Dance/Songs/Arts	21 . 8	56 . 7
Sewing/Cooking	12 . 1	66 . 2
Scouting-NSS/NCC	4 . 7	72 . 7

As is known from official documents, research reports and observations, schools in rural areas and urban slums are sparsely equipped. Most facilities that we would consider basic to a school are scarce (Table IV . 14).

Table IV. 14

Facilities Available in Schools

Facility	Percentage of Girl Children in Schools with these facilities
Playground	90
Library	42
Scouting	19
Science Lab	15

While in about 90% of the schools there is some playing space (called "playground") only 42% had a Library in their school while 15% had a Science Lab and 19% offer Scouting (Girl Guides). If the children in school are expected to develop the reading habit and to have a wide range of subjects with which they are familiar and if in addition they are expected to develop a scientific temper, then such expectations are unrealistic.

Selected examples from seven of the collaborating centres gives the reader a picture of the variations in the facilities provided in the schools (Table IV . 15).

Table IV. 15

School Facilities in Selected Samples

Location of Centre	Playground	Library	Scout/ Girl Guide	Science Lab
Andhra Pradesh				
Coastal	60 . 0	19 . 6	7 . 3	9 . 1
Gujarat				
Baroda	75 . 6	35 . 6	3 . 6	4 . 7
Kerala				
Trivandrum	98 . 8	77 . 5	55 . 3	31 . 3
Maharashtra				
Bombay (1)	71 . 8	26 . 3	20 . 9	26 . 7
Bombay (2)	97 . 4	67 . 8	43 . 3	0 . 8
Orissa				
Berhampur	81 . 0	42 . 0	22 . 0	42 . 0
Uttar Pradesh (Eastern)				
Varanasi	55 . 1	16 . 1	9 . 3	10 . 8

What fee-paying and elite schools offer in the form of basic facilities may remain in the realm of fantasy for the average school girl in this country.

The availability of a specific facility tells only a part of the story. Its use tells the other part. The table that follows makes the dismal scene positively tragic.

Table IV. 16

Use of School Facilities

	Facility			
Frequency	Playground	Library	Scouting	Science Lab
Often	24 . 0	4 . 4	2 . 1	2 . 6
Sometimes	23 . 6	14 . 7	2 . 9	2 . 2
Regularly	15 . 1	3 . 5	2 . 1	1 . 3
Never	9 . 5	13 . 7	10 . 2	6 . 9

The Library, for instance (available on the whole in 42% of the cases) is used frequently by 4.4% of the girls. A Science Lab, available only in 15% of the schools in the entire sample is reportedly used often in 2.6% cases and regularly in 1.3%. Even the playground, which 90% of the girls state is available in their schools, is used regularly by only 15% and frequently by 24% of the girls (Table IV.16).

To these sparsely equipped schools, girls still go with hope. However their mothers may have reasons for not sending them. Why are girls not sent to school? There are several reasons, and usually a combination of them. Nevertheless, an attempt was made to find out if the reasons were mainly economic, familial-cultural or personal.

Whether a girl child does receive education will depend on many factors, not the least of them the parental value for education. When the mothers were asked about the levels of education appropriate for girls and boys, some gender differences were seen. Those who said education was not necessary for girls (7.8%) or for boys (2.7%) were a small number. The gender difference persists in the expected direction as the levels go up (Table IV.17). The other category where the gender difference becomes apparent is when mothers say that children should study "as far as they want" - it is 29% in the case of girls and 45% in the case of boys. This means that boys will have more choice - and a little more leeway than girls to make choices in the field of education. These views do reflect a difference — but the reality will find a larger gap - i.e. when talking about it, mothers are aware that they are mentioning different levels for boys and girls - and there will be a tendency to even out the differences in talking about them.

Table IV. 17

Mother's Views on Education Level for Girls and Boys

Education Level	Girls	Boys
Education not necessary	7.8	2.7
Upto Primary/Read or write	7.5	1.7
Upto Middle	10.8	3.6
Upto Matric/High School/Higher Secondary	24.7	16.2
Upto Graduation	10.5	16.3
Upto Post-Graduation/Professional Degree	3.4	5.7
Diploma technical/Vocational	0.9	1.7
As far as they can/want	29.3	45.0
D.K.	1.4	1.9
N.A.	3.9	5.1

Table IV.18

Mother's Views on why Girl Children did not Attend School

Reasons girl Children not attending School	Percentage
Inapplicable attending - attended school	77.2
Too poor to provide education	7.4
Worked in the field/agricultural work	1.0
Family did not value girls education	2.3
No use educating girls/education makes marriage difficult	1.2
Girls had no motivation for studies	1.9
No good schooling facility/no transport facility	0.6
Had to attend to household/domestic work	2.0
Had to look after younger siblings	1.1
N.A./Mother not respondent	2.6

When mothers were asked why girl children did not attend school, that they were too poor to provide education was the largest single response (7 . 4%). The next two reasons were that the family did not value girls' education (2 . 3%) and that girls had to attend to domestic work (2%).

Table IV . 19

Mother's Views on why Girl Children Discontinued Studies

Reasons - Discontinued Studies	Percentage
Inapplicable - never attended school, attending school	83 . 6
Too poor to provide further education	3 . 1
Girl had no motivation for studies	2 . 7
Attend to household/domestic work	1 . 3
N.A./Mother not respondent	2 . 7

The reasons for girl children discontinuing studies according to mothers were approximately the same as their reasons for their not attending school at all. About 3% of the mothers mentioned their own meagre economic means to provide for further education as the cause. Another 2 . 7% said that the girls were not motivated to study as the reason for dropping out. The situational reasons stated by some mothers may be relevant for a larger section of the sample. The reasons were a) no school being available in the locality b) teachers being harsh c) the medium of instruction being difficult and d) there being no female teachers.

Table IV . 20

Age Girl Children Dropped out of School

Age	Percentage	Age	Percentage
7 Years	1.2	13 years	1.8
8 Years	1.5	14 Years	1.5
9 Years	1.6	15 Years	1.7
10 Years	2.1	16 Years	1.2
11 Years	1.6	17 Years	0.3
12 Years	2.0		

Although the hunch was that many girl children drop out at or before puberty, the findings indicate a much smoother flow over the age span of 7 to 17 (Table IV.20). At every age 1 - 2% of the girl children drop out of school — and while that does not seem to be inordinately high, the cumulative total cannot be ignored. The data

Table IV.21

Class in which Girl Children Dropped out of School

Class	Percentage	Class	Percentage
Standard 1	1.5	Standard 8	1.3
Standard 2	1.8	Standard 9	0.6
Standard 3	1.7	Standard 10	2.5
Standard 4	1.6	Standard 11	0.1
Standard 5	2.7	Standard 12	0.2
Standard 6	1.4	Inapplicable/ attending School/never attended School	82.4
Standard 7	2.0		

in this table came as a surprise to the research teams, who expected to see a somewhat more clear picture of peaks and troughs related to the age and developmental stages in the life of the girl child and discontinuation of studies.

Table IV.22

Stage at which Girl Children Dropped out - Selected Samples

Location of Centre	Total percentage of Dropouts	Primary	Middle	High School	Vocational/ Professional	N.A.
Andhra Pradesh						
Coastal	25.5	52.0	45.0	3.2	-	-
West Bengal						
Calcutta	16.5	60.7	35.3	-	-	4.0
Delhi (& U.P.)	15.3	38.0	60.9	1.0	-	-
Gujarat						
Baroda	11.1	48.5	28.1	15.4	2.8	4.9
Karnataka						
Mysore	22.2	19.2	77.4	3.2	-	-
Kerala						
Trivandrum	14.0	15.3	72.7	9.7	-	2.0
Maharashtra						
Bombay (2)	12.8	25.0	72.6	23.0	-	-
Pune	24.3	46.0	53.2	0.2	-	-
Orissa						
Berhampur	22.7	45.9	-	52.9	1.2	-

The next table (IV . 21) which should be studied parallelly has a somewhat clearer pattern : the largest number drop out from Standard 5, Standard 10 and Standard 7 in that order. The ending of the stage of school (related to availability of school) is quite important. Class V indicates the end of the Primary School and Class X the end of the Secondary School, while Class VII is probably when the girl children are closest to puberty.

When the same categories are studied in the data from the selected samples (Table IV . 22) some variations emerge. In Mysore, Trivandrum, Bombay and Delhi, the largest number of girl children drop out in the Middle School stage. In some regions (eg. Coastal A.P., Pune), the proportion of dropouts from the Primary and Middle school stages are approximately equal. However, no clear relationship emerges between total percentage of dropouts in an area, and the stage in which they discontinued.

Table IV . 23

Reasons for Dropping out stated by Girl Children

Reasons	Percentage
Economic Reasons	5 . 5
Socio-cultural reasons	3 . 9
Personal reasons	6 . 4
Situational reasons	2 . 8

It is interesting that personal reasons constitute the most important reason (6 . 4%) for dropping out given by the girls (Table IV.23). Those include bad health, dislike of teachers, fear of exams or lack of interest. Only 5 . 5% of the girls say that economic reasons were responsible for their leaving school. The situational reasons include lack of access to school, or no school being available in the locality. Only 1 . 8% (215 girls) of the total sample reported that they had no school in the locality. We must accept, of course, that "locality" has different definitions — and we gather from other data in this study, that under 2 kms is a kind of distance that is viewed as "local"; beyond that distance is out of one's "locality".

The next table (IV.24) on the relationship between caste membership and socio-cultural reasons for not attending school reveals some interesting figures. Only 4 . 4% of the entire sample stated that the family did not value girls' education, and 1 . 6% that society did not approve of it.

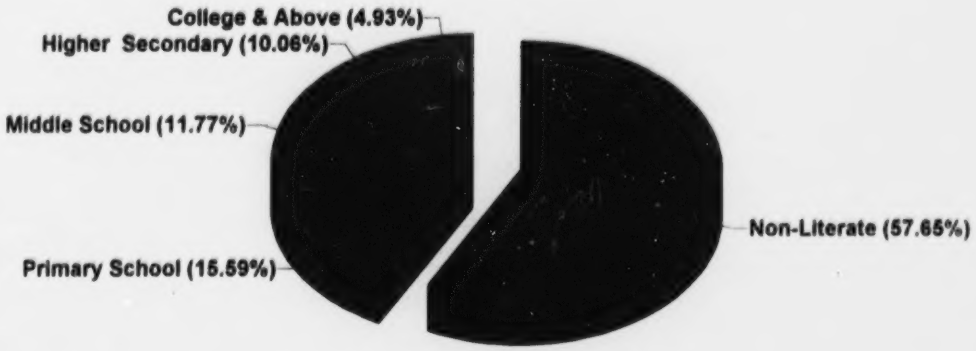
Of those who stated "the family does not value education", 1 . 3% were Brahmin girls, 15 . 6% were from the Forward Castes and 39 . 7% from the Backward Castes. Thirteen percent belonged to the Scheduled Castes.

Table IV.24

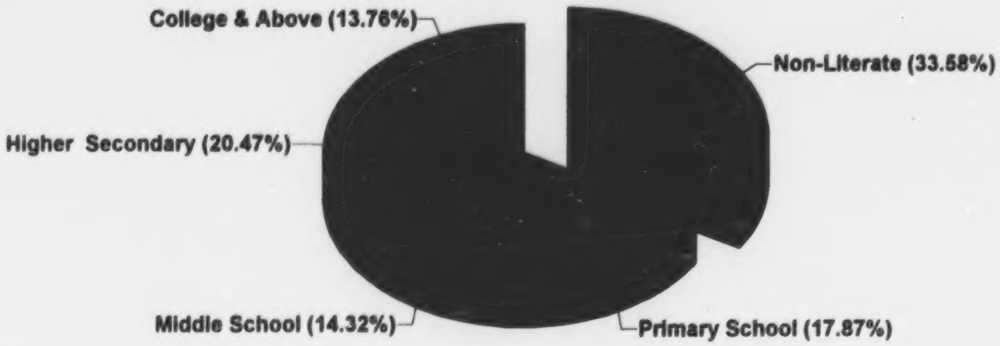
Caste and Socio-cultural Reasons for not Attending School

Socio-cultural reasons	Percent of total sample giving this reason	Proportions in which they gave this reason (percentage)				
		Brahmin	F.C.	B.C.	S.C.	S.T.
Family does not value girls education	4.4	1.3	15.6	39.7	13.3	9.9
Society does not like it	1.6	3.8	9.7	35.7	12.7	10.8

The perception that "Society" does not approve of girls attending school has a similar pattern, with 35.7% of those giving this reason belonging to the Backward Castes. This table has been presented mainly to provide a counterpoint for treating Indian "Society" as a monolithic entity. Clearly it is perceived differently by different members — and refers to the smaller social unit to which they belong.



E3. MOTHER'S LEVEL OF EDUCATION



E4. FATHER'S LEVEL OF EDUCATION

We see from Table IV. 25 that only 44.4% of girls whose mothers are not literate attend school. In families where the mothers have studied upto Primary level, 75.5% of the daughters go to school. Among mothers who have passed Middle school, 86.6% have daughters attending school. When mothers have Higher Secondary level education, 93.3% send their girl children to school. For College educated mothers, the figure of daughters attending school moves up to 97% (Table IV . 25).

Table IV.25

Mother's Level of Education and School Attendance of the Girl Child

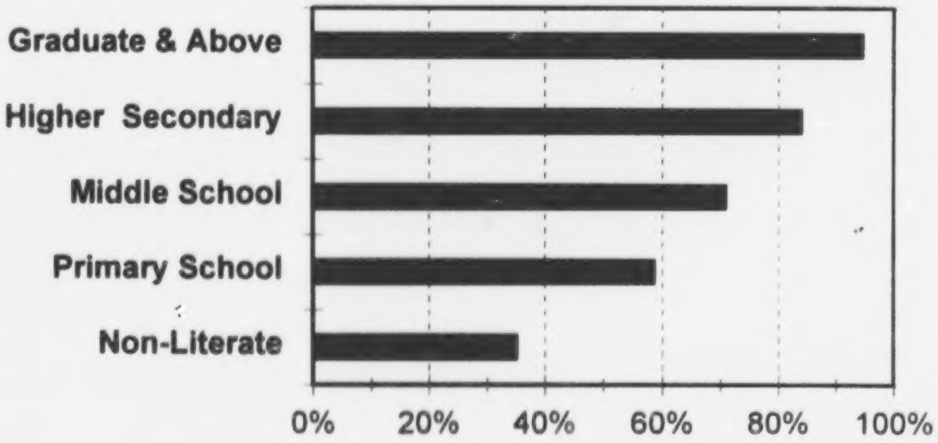
Mother's Education	Proportion of the Total	Girls Attending School
Non-literate	57 . 3	44 . 4
Primary	15 . 5	75 . 5
Middle	11 . 7	86 . 6
Higher Secondary	10 . 0	93 . 3
College, Graduate, PG, Diploma	4 . 9	97 . 1

Thus there is a strong linear relationship between mother's level of education and daughter's school attendance. (This factor is not to be considered in isolation. One must be aware of the clustering of other variables around that of the level of formal education of women). Nevertheless, it appears that a predictable antecedent of girls' education is their mothers' experience of it.

Table IV.26

Father's Level of Education and Proportion of Girl Children Attending School

Father's level of Education	Proportion of Total	Girl Children Attending School
Inapplicable - Father not alive	7.3	45.9
Non-literate	31.0	35.2
Primary	16.5	58.8
Middle	13.2	71.2
Higher Secondary	18.9	84.1
Graduate and above	12.7	94.7



E5. GIRLS ATTENDING SCHOOL
Related to Father's Level of Education

The only cautionary note is that when the majority of mothers fall under the category of "non-literate", the actual relationship between mothers' education and daughters' education is bound to be confounded. Also, because the relationship between the educational levels of mothers and daughters going to school was not part of the sampling design, the cells concerning educational levels are not of equal number. Therefore, conclusions on this post-hoc factor must be made cautiously. However, if the family values education for the girl, it is only logical that the girl child attends school.

Another relationship that emerged in this study was that between father's educational status and the daughter's attending school (Table IV . 26).

There is a direct linear relationship similar to that of mother's education between father's education and girls attending school. It adds to the argument that familial values will strongly influence the outcome for girls. And since formal educational qualifications influence employment and economic conditions, socio-economic status becomes a fairly robust predictor of life chances for the next generation.

For a comparison of the possible influence of both parents and their education on the school attendance of daughters, a table combining father's and mother's level of education is presented here (Table IV . 27).

As can be seen, the mother's level of education is even more clearly related to the girl child's being in school than the father's. However, as the cell numbers are uneven, and fewer mothers have education beyond Middle school level, the inference needs some circumspection.

Table IV. 27

Parents' level of Education and Proportion of Girl Children Attending School

Level of Education	Proportion of Total		Girl Children Attending School	
	Father	Mother	Father	Mother
Inapplicable - not alive	7 . 3	-	45 . 9	-
Non-literate	31 . 0	57 . 3	35 . 2	44 . 4
Primary	16 . 5	15 . 5	58 . 8	75 . 5
Middle	13 . 2	11 . 7	71 . 2	86 . 6
Higher Secondary	18 . 9	10 . 0	84 . 1	93 . 3
College, Graduate, PG Diploma	12 . 7	4 . 9	94 . 7	97 . 1

The higher the occupational level of the father, the larger the percentage of daughters attending school. For instance, 95.5% of the daughters of professionals are in school, while only 38.4% of the daughters of agricultural labourers attend school (Table IV . 28).

This is an unequivocal instance of socio-economic status outweighing all others in the opportunity structure for children.

The tables depicting the relationship between father's occupation and percentage of girls in school (Table IV . 28) and between household income and percentage of girls attending school (Table IV . 29) are a self-evident commentary on the socio-economic status variables that are antecedent to sending a girl to school. It is a direct linear relationship and leaves one in no doubt about the clustering of factors that contributes to the holding back of girl children from even the first beginnings of education.

Table IV. 28

Father's Occupation and Proportion of Girls in School

Occupation	Proportion of Total in Percentage	Girls Attending School
No specific occupation	1 . 3	55 . 4
Senior Professionals	3 . 2	95 . 5
Junior Professionals	5 . 0	89 . 2
Other White Collar	5 . 7	86 . 7
Service-unspecified	7 . 8	82 . 8
Skilled workers	9 . 1	65 . 0
Unskilled workers	10 . 3	50 . 7
Big farmers	2 . 7	58 . 6
Medium size farmers	3 . 7	61 . 0
Marginal farmers	8 . 2	43 . 6
Farmers (land size unspecified)	5 . 6	53 . 6
Domestic workers	1 . 4	49 . 7
Agricultural labourers	10 . 1	38 . 4
Large and medium size business	4 . 6	84 . 1
Petty business	6 . 0	58 . 5
Other similar occupations	2 . 5	46 . 7
Home-based activity	2 . 4	71 . 3
Any other	3 . 3	69 . 2

The traditional triad of socio-economic status: income, education and occupation are once again seen to cluster predictably. This is well supported by observation. It must be noted that this study covers empirical data based on families from different parts of the country. Thus the quantitative data have relevance for the country as a whole — and should serve as baseline data for policy interventions.

Table IV.29

Household Income and School Attendance of Girls

Household Income	Proportion of Total	Percent Girls Attending School
Less than Rs. 300	6.0	60
Rs. 300-500	9.4	52
Rs. 500-750	12.9	48
Rs. 750-1000	17.7	55
Rs. 1000-1500	17.6	60
Rs. 1500-3000	22.8	70
Rs. 3000-5000	9.9	85

Family structure and school attendance (or non-attendance or dropping out) do not appear to be related. Of the families in our study, 72.4% are nuclear in structure. Only in the case of the joint family do the figures of school attendance dip a little and the numbers "never in school" increase slightly. But since the numbers of nuclear and joint families are vastly different, any conclusion on this basis would have to be drawn very carefully. That there is no relationship between the family's nuclear or joint structure and the girl child's going to school is the more acceptable inference.

We know that family size (number of children and other dependents) is intrinsic to socio-economic status. We also know that people living on the margin of subsistence tend to increase the labour power within the family by having more children.

Table IV.30

Birth Order of the Girl Child among living Girl Children and School Attendance

Birth Order	Proportion	Attending School
First	65.4	63.7
Second	20.4	58.6
Third	8.1	55.1
Fourth	3.3	51.7

Does birth order make a difference to the access to school and continuity of schooling? In this sample, there was a total of 65 . 4% first born girls. Of these, 63 . 7% are in school. Of second born girls, the sample has 20 . 2% and among these 58 . 6% are in school. Among the 8 . 1% third borns, 55% are attending school (Table IV . 30).

Birth order is naturally related to family size. In a small family with two children, where there are no third-borns, both children are likely to get some schooling. Birth order among girls does make a slight difference to the girl child's school attendance.

Clearly all other things being equal, the first born daughter has an edge over girls born later, in access to schooling. Birth order data of this kind lend support to the argument that poverty compounds the gender discrimination in the family.

It is well known that one of the major deterrents to a girl child continuing her schooling, is her involvement with and responsibility for household fasks. A study of all the household tasks that girls have to do in order of priority, in terms of time spent by the girls, reveals the following order:

a) Cooking b) Cattle Care c) Child Care d) Cleaning e) Fetching water f) Fetching Fodder g) Marketing.

These tasks are not mutually exclusive but overlapping categories. Of the 8.6% who have fetching water as a duty, 80% are in school. Of the 13.4% whose duties include tending to cattle, 74% are in school. Of those looking after young children, only 61 . 4% are in school. Child care thus seems to be a pervasive demand on the girl children's time and therefore of their access to education.

Different reasons were mentioned by the girl children for liking school (Table IV . 31).

Table IV. 31

Reasons for Liking School

Reasons for Liking School	Percentage
Improves knowledge/skill ability'	25 . 3
Sociability and friendship	16 . 6
Employment prospects	8 . 5
Good Teachers/good environment	5 . 6
Did not like school	4 . 5
Inapplicable/reason not given	26 . 6

A quarter of the entire sample (25 . 3%) stated that schooling improved knowledge and skill, while 16 . 5% of the respondents stated that they liked school, because it promotes sociability and friendship. The improvement of employment prospects was mentioned by 8 . 5% of the entire sample, as the reason for wishing to be in school.

It was unfamiliar to the girls to be asked why they disliked school — even the girls who had discontinued would not answer the question. So the large majority of 93% of girls fell into the category of "inapplicable".

Table IV. 32

Dislike of School by Girl Children

Reasons for Disliking School	Percentage
Inapplicable - like school, never went to school	92.8
Teacher - related factors - Harsh or strict, discipline	1.2
Personal factors - I11 health, Low self - image	1.0
No specific reason/D.K.	1.2

Only 1.2% of the girls complained that they disliked school because of harsh teachers and strict discipline. Personal factors like ill health and low self image were mentioned by 1.0% of the girls (Table IV.32).

In 14.2% of the total, a tutor is available to help the girl with her school studies and homework and in 27% of the cases, parents and other relatives assist. (Table IV.33). Sometimes a neighbour or friend helps (5.2%). But the girl is left to do the homework by herself in about 30% of the cases. The mothers' statements are closely parallel and are introduced here to illustrate the consonance in views across generations.

Table IV. 33

Help in Studies for the Girl Child

Help in Studies	Mothers' view	Girls' view
Studies on her own	26.2	29.8
Tutor	13.9	14.2
Father	9.0	9.4
Mother	4.8	3.5
Both Parents	3.9	4.5
Brother	-	10.1
Others (Friends and Neighbours)	13. 6	5.2

How are future aspirations linked to school attendance? About 25% of girls are not decided. Of them, 48% attend school. Wanting only to be good housewives is mentioned by 15% of whom 25% attend school. Among those who wish to become teachers or take up other jobs 86% and 74% respectively are in school (Table IV . 34).

Table IV. 34

Future Aspirations and School Attendance

Future Aspiration	% of response	Attending	Dropout	Never in School
Doctor	8.2	95.4	3.2	1.4
Teacher / Lecturer	19.9	86.1	9.9	3.9
Officer	4.0	94.8	4.4	0.8
Some service	9.6	73.5	16.0	10.5
Skilled job	2.6	31.3	22.5	46.2
Self employed	2.6	31.3	22.5	46.2
Be well educated	4.1	73.7	16.3	10.1
Good Housewife	14.9	24.7	31.5	43.8
Any other	2.9	71.0	19.7	9.3
Not yet decided	25.7	48.1	18.2	33.6
N.A.	3.4	49.8	16.5	33.7

When girls mention their future aspirations it frequently turns out to be what they wish they could be, rather than what they can aspire to actually. For instance 13% of girls in school say they want to be a doctor. Given all the other variables, it seems fairly unlikely that such a proportion of the girls have the school setting, academic achievement or support structures in the family to qualify for admission to a medical course. The reason given for such ambition was a) wanting to serve society/the nation and b) for personal fulfilment and satisfaction.

Being a teacher was the stated aspiration of 28% of the girls attending school. Personal satisfaction was the most important reason for wanting to be a teacher while being self-reliant was next in order of importance; and "service", meaning any kind of job, was the aspiration of about 11% of the girls in school. Self-reliance was thus the most important factor. There is also a certain element of social acceptability in the answers. For instance, being a teacher is so clearly a socially accepted aspiration, that even 11% of the dropouts say they aspire to be teachers.

There is no very clear pattern in the occupational aspirations of girls from different areas. However, it is impossible to overlook the fact that 71 . 5% of the girls in Varanasi wish to be good housewives, while only 3 . 3% of the girls in Kerala state this as an ambition.

Table IV. 35

Aspirations of the Girl Child : Selected Samples

Location of Centre	Doctor/ Nurse	Teacher/ Service	Good House-Wife	Any other	No response Unsure
West Bengal					
Calcutta	27.8	18.0	14.2	25.5	14.5
Karnataka					
Mysore	8.3	42.2	25.9	3.8	19.4
Kerala					
Trivandrum	9.6	42.4	3.3	5.1	39.4
Maharashtra					
Bombay (1)	15.0	25.3	30.2	16.4	13.1
Pune	20.1	43.4	16.7	13.0	6.4
Uttar Pradesh					
Eastern					
Varanasi	6.2	5.1	71.5	3.5	13.5

What do mothers aspire for their daughters to become? To be housewives! The response, "Nothing other than marriage" is given by 36.4% of the mothers. "Any kind of job" is stated by 22% of those mothers whose daughters are in school. About half the group of mothers who wish nothing more than marriage for their daughters' future, send their girls to school.

Looking through these responses it becomes apparent that some mothers were also responding to what would ideally be their daughter's future. In other words, their aspirations for their daughters did not always tally with whether the children were in school, had dropped out, or never attended. There is a general value for education and schooling is recognized as helping to acquire basic literacy and numeracy.

Parents who consider the marriage of their daughter as the main goal of her life are less likely to send her to school for the entire period of secondary schooling. For instance, mothers who say that the ideal age of marriage is 15 years (and about 16.7% of mothers do so) do not consider the girl's education important; half of them have daughters who have never been to school and only one-third of these mothers send their girls to school.

What is most appreciated in a girl? What are the traits in the mother's view of a "good girl", a girl to be admired and emulated? About 16% of all mothers think that the girl must have an education. The large majority puts more emphasis on good nature, good behaviour and being good in household skills. Modesty, obedience, industriousness and sharing family responsibility are the most frequently mentioned characteristics of a good girl. Of the mothers who value the girls' education, 80% seem to have ensured that she attends school. In the families of 82% mothers who value good nature and quiet behaviour. 59% of the girls are attending school. It appears that some mothers feel that school attendance is not conducive to the development of submissive "feminine" behaviour.

Table IV. 36

Mother's Views on Girl Children going to School and School Attendance

Mother's Views	% of response	School Attendance		
		Attending	Dropped out	Never Attended
For mental growth development	38 . 5	77 . 9	12 . 9	9 . 1
Only if absolutely necessary	32 . 8	52 . 4	19 . 0	28 . 5
Should not go out/ not safe/social restrictions	23 . 1	49 . 3	20 . 8	29 . 9
Important to earn/ be self-sufficient	3 . 3	55 . 4	23 . 8	20 . 3

In tracing the antecedents of girl children attending school, one naturally sought the view of the mothers. They were asked what they felt if the child had to go out for education or employment. When mothers said that it was for the girl's mental growth and development (which 38 . 5% of the mothers did), about 80% of their daughters attended school (Table IV.36). In this category, there were only 9% who had never attended school and about 12% who dropped out. When mothers said that girls should go out of the house only when absolutely necessary (and about 33% said so), only 52% of their daughters attended school and 28 . 5% had never attended. Those mothers who worried about the safety of their girls or about social approval had a very similar pattern of daughters' school attendance. That it is important to earn money and be self sufficient was the view of mothers whose daughters would take up jobs, but the proportion of the total was only 3 . 3%. Clearly, mothers tend to be consistent in how they feel and what they do vis-a-vis their girl children's education. However one must not overlook the point that even when the mothers were least keen about their daughters' education, about half of the daughters managed to go to school. Therefore the mother's views are important but do not become a sufficient condition.

Table IV. 37

Person deciding on Schooling and School Attendance of Girl Children

Mother's Views	% of response	School Attendance		
		Attending	Dropped out	Never Attended
Mother	9.7	58.2	22.5	19.2
Father	33.1	58.3	19.3	22.4
Both Parents	39.7	71.5	14.8	13.7
Girl Child (Self)	0.4	63.3	16.3	20.4
Others	11.7	59.1	15.5	25.4

Table IV. 38

Mother's view on Girl's level of Education

Ideal level of Education for the Girl : Percentage of mothers	Attending	Dropout	Never Attended
No use educating girls (7.8)	16.0	14.6	69.5
Primary (7.5)	29.3	20.5	50.2
Middle (10.8)	42.1	24.7	33.2
High School (24.7)	62.7	23.3	14.0
Graduation (10.5)	85.6	10.3	4.1
P.G/Diploma (4.3)	86.9	9.0	4.1
As far as they want (29.3)	78.5	13.1	8.4

When both parents are convinced about the importance of the girl child's education, there is a much better chance of the girl child being sent to school, than if only one parent decided (Table IV. 37). The figures of dropouts and children never attending reflect the same

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finding. A miniscule proportion of girls (0 . 4%) say that they themselves decided - and the lack of their autonomy is obvious. This table is made out from the perception of mothers and must be seen in that context.

Upto which class should a daughter attend school? When mothers say that there is no use educating a daughter, which they do in 7 . 8% (940 girls) of the total sample, their lack of confidence in education is reflected in their behaviour (Table IV . 38).

Almost 70% of the daughters of this lot never attended school. Some mothers (29 . 3% of the whole) say that their daughters should study "as far as they want" and 78% of their daughters are in school. For the rest, there is a linear relationship between the level aimed for and the proportion in school - moving up from 29% to 86% as the aspired education level goes up. The converse can also be seen, with those never attending and those dropping out (Table IV . 38).

How does one get at genuine motivation, while filling up a fairly factual questionnaire? Fortunately, it is possible as there are some questions which will reveal motivational aspects as well. For instance, the mothers were asked whether they spent some time with their children, when they were doing school homework. About 62 . 5% of the mothers said that they spent no time helping with either their son's or their daughter's homework. About 10 . 9% mothers said they helped both. Considering that the large proportion of mothers in this sample were either not literate or barely literate, their spending time with the child's educational tasks was probably only of marginal consequence. Nevertheless emotional support is implied in the act and the keenness of mothers that their children should do well in school comes through.

When asked upto what level boys and girls should receive education - the girl's answers show that they make no gender difference on the whole. The difference is marginal with a slight edge for boys (Table IV . 39).

Table IV. 39

Ideal level of Education for Girls and Boys: View of the Girl Child

Level of Education	For Girls	For Boys
High School	26 . 7	21 . 4
Graduation	31 . 4	35 . 3
PG or Professional	21 . 0	24 . 0
Not specific/as far as they can go	11 . 4	12 . 3

This table seen in conjunction with the class in which girl children have dropped out seems to enhance the sense of dismay. Ideally, says the girl child, a girl should

Table IV. 40

Ideal Level of Education desired by the Girl Child : Selected Samples

Location of Centre	Primary	Middle	High School Inter Matriculation	Graduation	Post Graduate Professional	Diploma/ Vocational	As far as they can/ want	Not sure/ dont know
Andhra Pradesh								
Coastal	-	16 . 3	-	48 . 1	35 . 5	-	-	-
West Bengal								
Calcutta	2 . 8	6 . 8	19 . 6	25 . 6	16 . 8	2 . 3	18 . 8	7. 3
Delhi & (U.P)	1 . 4	10 . 7	38 . 0	15 . 4	13. 8	-	-	20 . 1
Gujarat								
Ahmedabad	19 . 0	21 . 0	22 . 3	17 . 7	-	-	-	20 . 0
Baroda	6 . 2	9 . 4	25 . 1	21 . 8	10 . 2	0 . 4	10 . 9	16 . 0
Karnataka								
Mysore	-	-	26 . 1	50 . 3	23 . 5	-	-	-
Kerala								
Trivandrum	0 . 2	0 . 5	25 . 0	31 . 5	22 . 7	3 . 2	16 . 8	-
Maharashtra								
Bombay (1)	16 . 3	-	49 . 0	23 . 3	11 . 4	-	-	-
Bombay (2)	-	5 . 7	30 . 0	32 . 5	18 . 3	-	13 . 5	-
Pune	-	4 . 0	36 . 1	24 . 6	10 . 2	18 . 3	6 . 5	-
Orissa								
Berhampur	0 . 5	3 . 0	20 . 8	16 . 0	10 . 2	2 . 0	13 . 0	34 . 5

have at least a high school education (26 . 7% of the girls). And 31 . 4% of the girls say that graduation with a College or University degree is ideal. The girls feel that boys should have a slightly higher level of education, but this is only a marginal difference.

Between the ideal and the actual lies the shadow. And this shadow is long and dense. In other words, the girl children in our study are very far from realising their ideal level of education. Many of them in poverty groups will become the unpaid bonded labour of the family to be transferred to another family at the time of marriage, with some dimunition in status, if at all there is a change.

When one asks the girl child how far she wishes to study or what level of education she desires, the responses may reflect a) wishful thinking b) realistic ambition or c) social stereotype. Therefore the level mentioned by the girl cannot be in itself an indication of her real status. For instance, in the Coastal A.P. sample, 48% of the girls mention graduation as the goal, while another 35% say that the girl should have a professional or post-graduate degree. However, in actuality 50% of the sample were not attending school, and 25% had dropped out. It does seem unrealistic for 83% of them to desire University education. The all India dropout rate for girls from Class I - V is 49 . 7 and from Class I - VIII is 68 . 3%. That says it all.

Some groups have reported responses with a greater degree of realism as in the West Bengal sample. However, in almost all the samples the ideal level of education was far higher than any they could hope to achieve. In that sense, the difference can be taken as an indication of how the girls themselves realise that their life chances are far from ideal. The "not sure - don't know" category also operates as an escape hatch for those unwilling to commit themselves to any statement, or for those whose decisions are not in their own control (Table IV. 40).

If there is no clear pattern emerging (no relationship between ideal and actual level or between ideal level and adult literacy level) it is probably because the response to an "ideal" was not considered necessary to be anchored to reality.

Gender Differences

Seventy one percent of all the girls say that boys and girls should have equal education. Of these 70% are in school.

Out of the 7 . 6% who say boys need more education as they look after the family, 45.6% are in school. Clearly girls' attitudes of gender equality also result in using the educational system to their own advantage. Conversely, girls who attend school also begin to see education as a right for all children. They seem less likely to voice a stereotype and more likely to speak for their rights.

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Table IV. 41

Advantages of Education

Advantage	Percent
No advantage at all	3.2
Helps in personal development /self confidence/ better communication/ability /good manners	49 . 9
Improves skills/competence	12 .7
Improves chances of getting employment/ career advancement	18. 4
Improves social status /recognition	4 . 1
Better marriage prospects	0 . 7
Reduction in dowry	0 . 3
Plays educative role (in health, child care etc.)	2 . 0
Any other	3 . 4
N.A.	5 . 2

When asked about the advantage of education, a majority (50%) of the girls say that education gives self-confidence and better communication ability. About 19% feel that education would give them a better chance to get employment. Another 4% say that education improves social status and recognition while only 2% feel that education helps for daily living (health, child care etc.) (Table IV . 41).

What are the disadvantages of illiteracy? We asked the girls and found a small percentage (3 . 6%) saying that there was no disadvantage. Of these, 66% had never been to school and only 19% were attending school. The largest response category (50 . 6%) was that illiteracy results in a low self-image. Another 12 . 6% said that it leads to lower social status and 11 . 7% that it would yield fewer job opportunities.

The question about whether anyone benefited from educational programmes was misunderstood because even of the 35% who said they did not benefit, 42% were attending school. Similarly, in the urban sample, 42% said they did not benefit but 66% of them were in school. It is obvious that parents and children who have access to a Government school in the locality feel it is a right to have education and do not treat it particularly as a benefit. "Benefit" they would define as something special.

Chapter V

HEALTH

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Chapter V

HEALTH

Introduction

The problem of health is a continuing one for the girl child. The lack of adequate food and nutrition in infancy, the neglect of immunization of children at the stipulated time and intervals and the unavailability of timely medical treatment have been widely observed and documented in India. Many women have depletion due to frequent pregnancies, ailments which result from under-nutrition and overwork. Girls are seen to have low weight, stunted growth and delayed physical development. Aside from affecting the general health status of the female child, this also leads to a high female mortality rate during pregnancy and childbirth, and to the newborn child being at risk.

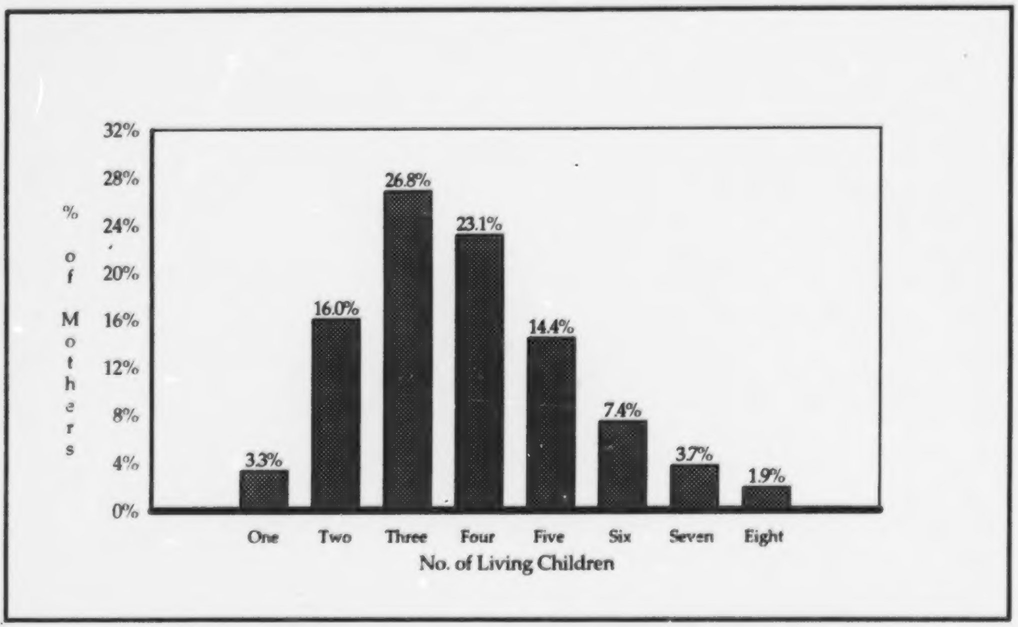
The table below presents mothers in this sample and the number of living children that they have.

Table V . 1

Mothers and Number of Living Children

No. of Living Children	Percentage of Mothers
One	3 . 3
Two	16 . 0
Three	26 . 8
Four	23 . 1
Five	14 . 4
Six	7 . 4
Seven	3 . 7
Eight	1 . 9
N.A.	3 . 4

From the above table V . I we see that almost 50% of the mothers have between 3 and 4 children. About 20% have fewer than two children, 14 . 4% have five children and about 13% have six or more children. It is thus obvious that the highly publicised two child norm has not been adopted by the average family and that the hope of achieving zero population growth in the overall population of India is still distant.



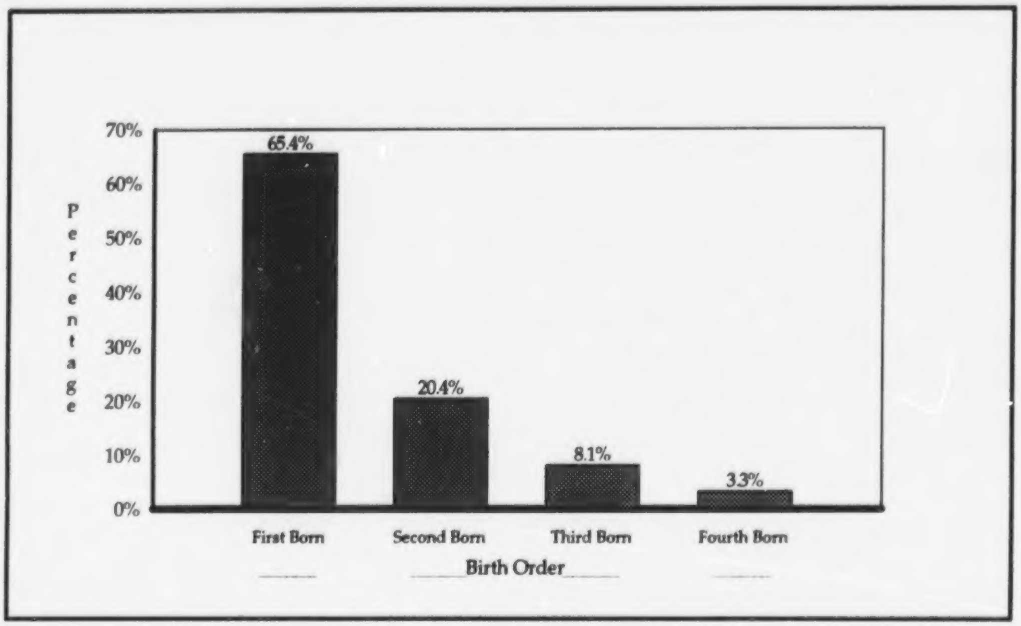
HL1. MOTHERS AND NUMBER OF LIVING CHILDREN

The table V.2 below shows that two-thirds of the girls in the sample were first born and one-fifth were second born. The percentages of third and fourth born are considerably smaller. That more than 85% of the entire sample fell in the first two birth orders is a statistic of some importance, open to interpretation.

Table V.2

Birth Order of the Girl Child among Living Girl Children

Birth Order	Percentage
First	65.4
Second	20.4
Third	8.1
Fourth	3.3
N.A.	2.8



HL2. BIRTH ORDER OF THE GIRL CHILD AMONG LIVING GIRL CHILDREN

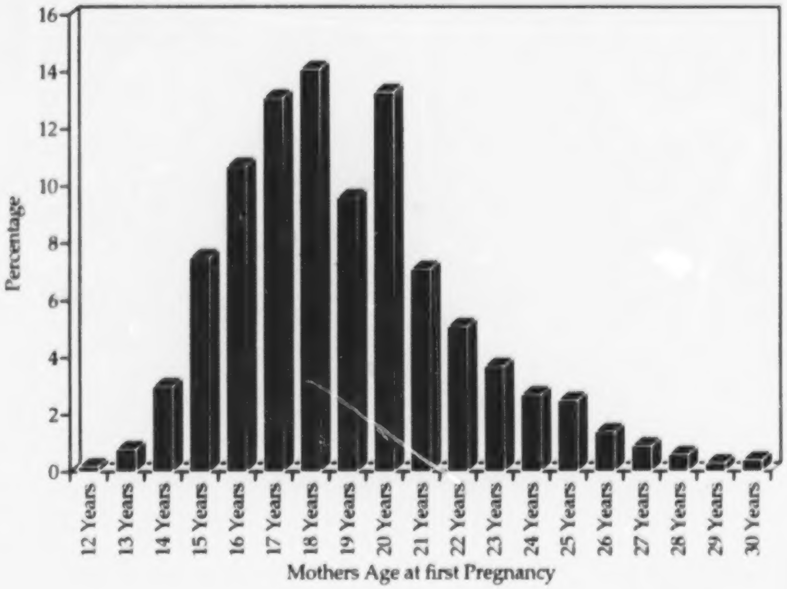
Table V.3

Mother's Age at First Pregnancy

Mother's Age at First Pregnancy	Percentage	Mother's Age at First Pregnancy	Percentage
12 years	0.2	22 years	5.1
13 years	0.8	23 years	3.7
14 years	3.0	24 years	2.7
15 years	7.5	25 years	2.5
16 years	10.7	26 years	1.4
17 years	13.1	27 years	0.9
18 years	14.1	28 years	0.6
19 years	9.6	29 years	0.3
20 years	13.3	30 years	0.4
21 years	7.1	N.A.	3.0

As per the definition of an adult as one who is above the age of eighteen, it is evident that nearly 35% of the mothers were pregnant with their first child before reaching adult status. Early child bearing tends to have an adverse effect on the health and general well being of the mothers. Further, the immaturity of the mother can also result in the birth of an at-risk infant. Thus the mother's age at the first pregnancy is a predictor of the health of the child. However in these families, the mother's age at the birth of the girl child under question was not specifically ascertained.

Pregnant women from deprived or under-privileged families do not receive adequate nutritional supplements and the result is poor health for the mothers with the consequence of having infants who are low in birth weight, physically underdeveloped and particularly prone to infections. Simple preventive interventions like the administration of Anti Tetanus Vaccine (ATS) to the pregnant mother are lacking in many cases. Though it is widely known that mothers who do not receive any antenatal care incur a significantly higher risk for the infant than those who receive such care, this message has not reached people at the grass roots.



HL3. MOTHER'S AGE AT FIRST PREGNANCY

Status of Mothers during Pregnancy

A number of factors related to the health of the mother during pregnancy were investigated. Whether they reported for regular health checks or not constituted an important question.

Table V.4

Mother's Health Checks during Pregnancy

Health Check up	Percentage
Regular check up for all pregnancies	31.2
Regular check up for some pregnancies	3.4
Check ups taken whenever necessary	11.6
No health checks taken	2.2
N.A./Mothers did not respond	51.6

A significant portion of the sample (51.6%) fell into the category 'did not respond/ N.A.' However, about 31% of the expecting mothers did go for a regular check up and about 15% were a little more casual, getting attended to occasionally or only when necessary.

Table V.5 reveals that about 54% of the mothers had never taken an ATS while 34.6% had taken all the required doses for all pregnancies. This is a reflection of maternal health facilities available to ordinary citizens in the last two decades, and also perhaps of their confidence in the health care system.

Table V.5

Anti-Tetanus Serum (ATS) taken by Mother

ATS Taken by Mother	Percentage
All doses for all pregnancies	34.6
Sometimes for some pregnancies	9.0
ATS never taken	54.2
N.A. Mothers did not respond	2.2

Immunization : Mother's View

Immunization of children against preventable diseases has become acceptable to a large majority of families. However, on finding out that almost 70% of the mothers had given some immunization to their girl children in infancy, some probing was done for more details.

Mothers were not too clear on the several immunization shots to be given and about their own role in the prevention of specific diseases. There were some women who had a general idea that immunization shots prevent disease, but anything more specific was known only in rare cases. For many mothers, the process of inoculation seemed to mean a single point of intervention. For instance, if the child had been given the BCG vaccine, the mothers were often unaware that he/she also needed to be given other vaccines for eg. against measles. Many of the mothers had no knowledge of booster doses either.

The table illustrates the number of mothers who had immunized their children, availing themselves of the standard immunizations against tuberculosis, diphtheria-pertussis-tetanus, polio and measles. There was no gender discrimination in immunization.

Table V.6

Children's Immunizations

Number of Children	BCG	DPT/Polio	Measles
All children	51.1	50.1	43.4
None	30.8	31.0	39.3
Some boys and some girls	15.9	16.6	15.0
N.A.	2.2	2.3	2.3

As can be seen in the above table (V.6) a little over 50% of the children had been immunized against tuberculosis with BCG and against DPT and Polio, while 43% had been immunized against measles. The number of children who had not been given BCG immunization or DPT/Polio were a little over 30% and 39% of the children had not received immunization against measles.

The mothers were also asked where they took their children to be immunized. The proportions of mothers using different centres are presented in the table that follows (V.7).

It can be seen that the hospital was where 33.7% of the mothers had their children immunized, followed by the Primary Health Centre where 13.7% had gone, while 10.2% of them went to private clinics and doctors.

Table V.7

Place of Immunization

Place of Immunization	Percentage
Dispensary	5.8
Hospital	33.7
Private Clinic/Doctor	10.2
PHC	13.7
Not immunized/N.A.	36.6

Table V.8

Girl Child's Knowledge of Immunization

Immunization	Percentage
Yes	68.9
No	30.6
N.A.	0.5

There was no apparent discrimination between girls and boys on the part of mothers for getting them immunized. Some mothers in the sample were aware of the benefits of immunization. A majority knew that it would prevent some illness or disease. Some considered immunization to be important but were unaware of the reason. Not only lack of awareness, but the lack of necessary facilities is also a major constraint to the full immunization coverage of children. Even the mothers of girl children who had been immunized were found to be unaware of the need for specific immunizations, the dosages and time schedules. For many mothers, the process of inoculation was not always clear and to most, the rationale for a variety of protective shots was not apparent. The mothers of girl children who were not immunized could give no reason for their negligence or oversight. There were many families who were not even aware of the importance of immunization in the health of their children.

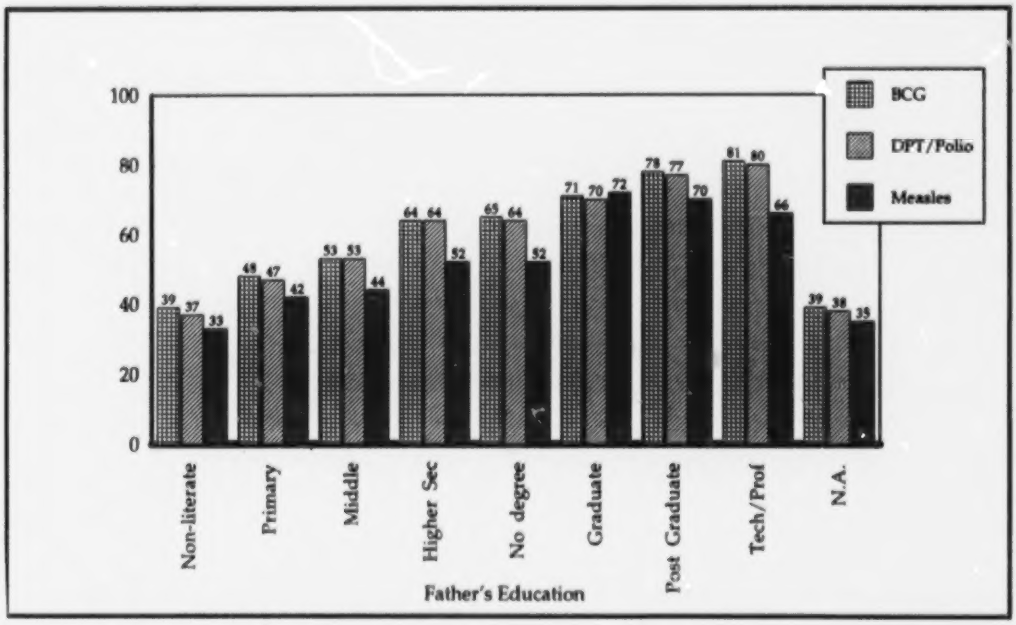
The girl children were asked whether they knew about immunization and 68.9% of them did have some knowledge while 30.6% did not know about immunization (V.8). From their responses, it also became clear that both boys and girls were immunized (or neglected) and that gender had no relationship to immunization.

Immunization: Relationship to Father's Education

Table V.9

Level of Father's Education and Immunization of Girl Child

Father's Education	Proportion of Sample	Percentage Immunized
Non-literate	31	48
Primary	17	57
Middle	13	64
Higher Secondary	19	75
College — No Degree	3	81
Graduate	6	85
Post Graduate	2	84
Tech./Professional	2	89
N.A.	7	50



HL4. LEVEL OF FATHER'S EDUCATION AND TYPES OF IMMUNIZATION

A direct correlation was found between the level of the father's education and the number of girls who had been immunized. It was found that as the level of the father's education increased, so did the proportion of girl children immunized in their respective families.

From 48% immunization among the daughters of non-literate fathers, the proportion went up to 89% of fathers who were professional or had technical qualifications. When fathers had received higher secondary education, 75% of their daughters were immunized. This linear relationship is at once a comment on parental attitudes to preventable diseases and their access to immunization facilities.

Nutrition and Health Treatment of the Girl Child

Nutrition in the early years is a crucial input for the general health and well being for a lifetime. The tables below depict the patterns of breast-feeding and the introduction of cereal food in the infant's diet.

It can be seen from the Table V . 10 that about 27% of the mothers breastfeed their girl children for less than a year while nearly 49% do it for more than a year and about 20% breastfeed them for more than two years.

Some reasons that are stated by mothers for stopping breast feeding are as follows:
- Did not have enough milk
- Another pregnancy started
- Death of the infant.

Table V . 10

Duration of Breast Feeding of Girl Child

Duration of Breast feeding	Percentage
Less than 1 month	0 . 8
Less than 3 months	2 . 0
Less than 6 months	4 . 2
Less than 1 year	20 . 6
Less than 1½ years (18 months)	26 . 1
Less than 2 years	22 . 8
More than 2 years	19 . 6
Do not remember	0 . 3
No Feeding	1 . 3
N.A.	2 . 3

The reasons given by mothers for continuing to breastfeed their children for an extended period of time were as follows:

- It was economical
- It was the purest form of nutrition available
- There was no other milk/food available
- Child could not be weaned from breast milk and so it was continued
- An emotional bond is formed with the child while breastfeeding.

Information about the child's age when milk supplements were given was also collected. Almost 24% of the sample mothers introduced milk supplement before the first year of the child, while about 45% of them did so after the first year. About 29% said that they never supplemented breast milk (Table V . 11).

Table V . 11

Age at which Milk Supplement was given

Age at which Milk Supplement was given	Percentage
After 3 months	3 . 8
After 6 months	4 . 4
After 10 months	15 . 5
After 1 year	24 . 8
After 18 months	19 . 5
Never supplemented with other milk	28 . 3
N.A.	3 . 7

From Table V . 12 which follows we can see that the pattern of giving cereal food to the infant was parallel to the milk supplement. About 45% of the mothers introduced cereals before the child was a year old and 27 . 5% did so after the first year. About 24% of the mothers introduced cereals after the child was 18 months old

Table V . 12

Age at which Cereals were Given

Age at which Cereals were Given	Percentage
After 3 months	4 . 5
After 6 months	31 . 6
After 10 months	9 . 2
After 1 year	27 . 5
After 18 months	24 . 0
N.A.	3 . 2

The project teams tried to find out if there were any differential trends in the health and nutritional status of the males and females in the family. The problem of nutrition is essentially linked to poverty, but for women the problem is further compounded by gender discrimination. Paradoxically, women are the chief nutritionists, being responsible for all the food cooked at home; yet they take a lower share for themselves and their daughters. Frequently they are the last to eat, which means doing with what is left over. The earlier chapter on Socialization covers some of this in detail. In the tables below, both the mother and the girl child were asked about the eating patterns followed in their households.

Cereals and pulses appear to be the staple foods in the diets of the girls in this study. Only 6% of the girls said that their main meals consisted of cereals only, without any vegetables or pulses. Of the rest, the majority (around 49%) said their meals consisted of cereals, vegetables and pulses. About 14% ate only cereals and pulses. Around 10% had milk or eggs (V . 13). It is likely that girls in these latter two categories were from the urban areas, or the middle SES. Only a very small percentage (around 4%) had access to fruit and sweets in addition to the staples. The data appear to be normally distributed, and a true reflection of the various socio-economic categories in this sample.

Tables V . 13

Food at Main Meals

Main Meals	Percentage
Only cereals (rice, chapati etc.) without any vegetables or pulses	5 . 9
Cereals and pulses	13 . 7
Cereals, Vegetables and pulses	48 . 8
Cereals, Vegetables, pulses and milk/egg	9 . 7
Cereals, Vegetables, pulses and meat/fish	14 . 2
Cereals, Vegetables, pulses and meat/fish and milk	3 . 0
Cereals, Vegetables, pulses and fruit, sweets	1 . 1
Cereals, Vegetables, pulses and fruit, meat/fish sweets	3 . 3
N.A.	0 . 3

Table V.14

Food In-Between Meals

In-Between Meals	Percentage
Nothing	14.4
Only/tea/Coffee/Milk	18.3
Only snacks/sweets	7.2
Tea/coffee with some snacks/sweets	21.7
Milk with some snacks/sweets	3.4
Roasted nuts/cereals/pulses/other locally available items	18.1
Jaggery/candy/ice-cream	0.4
Any other	6.9
No fixed item in particular	8.3
N.A.	1.3

Around 18% of the girls said they had only tea, coffee or milk between meals. An equal number stated that they ate roasted nuts, cereals or pulses, and about 22% said that in addition to tea or coffee they had access to snacks or sweets. These respondents however may well have been referring to the occasional availability of such treats as sweets or roasted nuts, rather than the consumption of these items on a regular basis (Table V.14).

Only about 14% of the girls said they did not eat anything between meals. Perhaps this figure is a little low in the context of the data on who eats first and who eats

Table V.15

Main Meals taken by Boys and Girls

Main Meals	Percentage
One meal by boys and girls	0.2
Two meals by boys and girls	43.9
Three meals by boys and girls	52.8
One meal by girls and more by boys	0.3
Two meals by girls and three by boys	0.8
No fixed number of meals (boys and girls)	1.7
N.A.	0.3

last in the family, which shows that when it comes to the apportioning of food, girlsare lowest on the priority list.

The information on the number of meals consumed by boys and girls follows. More than half the sample (53%) say that boys or girls, or both, have three meals a day; but only 0.8% say that while boys have three meals, girls have only two. Nearly 44% said that boys and girls consume two meals a day.

Table V.16

Food in-between Meals taken by Boys and Girls

In-Between Meals	Percentage
Quite often by boys and girls	23.0
Sometimes by boys and girls or both	35.5
More often by boys than by girls	4.1
More often by girls than by boys	0.2
Never by either boys and girls	16.3
No fixed pattern either by boys or girls	16.2
N.A.	4.7

Food was "quite often" eaten between meals by 23% of boys and girls. Food was "sometimes" consumed or consumed in "no fixed pattern" by around 35.5% of boys and girls. While 4% of respondents said food was consumed in-between meals more often by boys than by girls, about 16% said neither boys nor girls ever ate between meals (V.16).

These data support and explain the data given in (Table V.14).

Table V.17

Frequency / Inadequacy

	Percentage
Quite often	2.1
Sometimes	9.0
Rarely	11.2
Never	77.5
N.A.	0.2

When queried about the frequency or inadequacy of the food they received, an overwhelming 77 . 5% of the girls said they had never felt that they had not had enough to eat. Only around 2% said they felt this quite often; a further 9% said they sometimes felt their food was inadequate, and around 11% said they rarely felt this way. Again these data do not support the general belief on the subject that the majority of girls in the family go hungry. Similarly, 90% of girls in the sample said that they were never denied any particular food item and were not discriminated against when it came to food (Table V . 18).

Table V . 18

Gender Difference Food Items

Food Items	Percentage
Girls are denied /given less/not given the best of meat/fish/eggs	1 . 6
Girls are denied /given less milk/milk products/sweets	3 . 4
Girls are denied /given less fruits	0 . 4
Girls are denied /given less butter/ghee	0 . 5
Girls are denied /given less all the above items	1 . 7
Denied nothing/not discriminated	89 . 9
N.A.	2 . 5

Table V . 19

Reasons - Girls denied Food Items

Reasons	Percentage
No specific reason	0 . 3
Considered harmful for girls	0 . 9
Boys are expected to do hard/more work	4 . 1
Traditionally it has been like this	1 . 8
Will spoil looks/will make marriage difficult	0 . 2
Any other	0 . 7
Inapplicable - no discrimination/no boy in the family	91 . 4
D.K.	0 . 3
N.A.	0 . 3

A large majority of girl children (89 . 9%) said that there was no gender discrimination in food. Of the 9% or so of respondents, who stated that there was some discrimination and that girls were denied some foods, nearly half (4 . 1%) felt that the reason for this was that boys worked harder, or did more work and therefore needed more nutrition (Table V . 19). Nearly 2% gave "tradition" or custom as the reason for this differentiation.

The girls in the study were asked whether they were served lunch at school or in their place of work. Nearly 28% of girls did not go to work or school, and so did not come under this category (Table V. 20).

Around 65% said lunch was not provided, while 5% were given lunch at work or in school.

Table V . 20

Lunch Served at School / work

Lunch served	Percentage
Yes - no further information	1 . 9
Yes - at school	5 . 1
Yes - at place of work	0 . 2
No	64 . 7
Inapplicable - do not go school/place of work	27 . 6
N.A.	0 . 5

Table V . 21

Carrying Lunch to School / Place of Work

Carried Lunch	Girls	Boys
Yes	30 . 8	24 . 8
No, lunch served at school/ place of work	5 . 4	5 . 4
No, come back home for lunch	18 . 4	20 . 8
No, do not carry lunch even though not served at school/ place of work	9 . 7	9 . 6
No, no. further information	7 . 2	6 . 0
Inapplicable, Do not go school/ work	28 . 6	33 . 4

As shown in Table V.21, 30.8% of the girls who were not served lunch carried lunch with them; around 25% of boys did so. It is possible that both boys and girls eat their meals at home when they return from school or work, or that children working in fields have their noon meal taken out to them. There is no apparent gender discrimination in this matter.

Respondents were asked whether there were any gender differences with regard to food kept at home for school children (V.22). For around 34% the questions were irrelevant because they either did not go to school or work, or ate lunch at school / work. Nearly half (45%) said that food was kept for both boys and girls. While around 5% said that food was kept for boys only, around 10% said that food was kept for girls only. These figures appear not to tally with data reported elsewhere in this study, since they appear to show a bias for the girl child.

Table V.22

Gender Difference in Food Kept

Food Kept	Percentage
For both boys and girls	44.7
For boys only	4.6
For girls only	9.4
Neither for boys nor for girls	4.9
Inapplicable - carry lunch or lunch served at school/work place or do not go to school/work	34.2
N.A.	2.2

It must be remembered that since the sampling was purposive, and only the family with a girl between seven and eighteen was included in the study, there is a problem regarding gender comparisons. In the case of the girl children in the sample, the proportion of boys to girls in these families was 9:10 i.e. there was a slightly smaller number of male siblings, with whom some of the comparisons were made.

Table V.23

Who Eats First in the Family : Girl Child's and Mother's Perspectives

Who Eats First	Percentage	
	Girl Child	Mother
Family eats together	33.2	34.8
Male members/father/husband/children	29.9	23.9
No specific order/as situation demands	36.9	41.3

From Table V. 23, we see the responses to the question "Who eats first?". About $^1/_3$ of both girl children and their mothers say that the family eats together. About 30% of the girls and 24% of the mothers say that the men in the family eat first. The rest fall in the category of no specific order, or as the situation demands.

Table V . 24

Who Eats Last in the Family : Girl Child's and Mother's Perspectives

	Percentage	
Who Eats Last	Girl Child	Mother
Family eats together	23 . 8	36 . 7
Girl child and other female members	36 . 7	33 . 9
No specific order/as situation demands	39 . 5	29 . 4

The other side of the coin is found when the question of who eats last is asked. Table V. 24 depicts the responses. Here only about 24% of the girl children say that the family eats together while 36 . 7% of the mothers say so. It is clear that the girl child perceives the females in the family including herself to be eating last in 36 . 7% of the cases. The mother's responses to that question is marginally lower. The order of eating is seen as more discriminatory by girl children than by their mothers. From the two tables, it is unambiguous that males were never the last to eat and female members never the first.

Sex Differences in Health Treatment

Generally, ordinary ailments like coughs, colds, stomach disorders, allergies, body pain and so on are treated at home. The team tried to analyze where the cases of serious ailments such as cholera, typhoid, infection, TB etc. were treated and also whether there were any differential patterns of treatment for boys and girls.

In the case of 40% boys and 45% girls (Table V. 25) their parents took them to private practitioners. Fewer children used the local dispensary: 13 . 5% of the boys and 14 . 9% of the girls were taken to the dispensary for treatment. About 36% of the boys and 39% of the girls were taken to the hospitals for treatment. Thus we find that the girls and boys are given the same treatment as far as their health problems are concerned.

Table V.25

Place Boys and Girls are Treated

Where Treated	Percentage	
	Boys	Girls
Home	1.0	1.2
Dispensary	13.5	14.9
Hospital	36.2	38.7
Private clinic	39.9	44.5
Any other	0.3	0.3
N.A.	8.7	0.1

The reasons for preference of the places of treatment (such as home, dispensary, hospitals, private clinics) mentioned by mothers in an informal dialogue were as follows:

- No other facilities available
- Proximity
- Least expensive/other facilities more expensive
- Other facilities overcrowded/ dirty / unhygienic
- Having faith in the treatment
- Self/family members working in that place/entitled to the facility

When the team tried to study the kind of treatment provided to boys and girls, it was found that a large number of mothers preferred allopathic medicines. Very few (2.4%) chose Ayurvedic/Unani/Homeo-pathic treatment for boys and girls. A negligible percentage went to the local healers (Ojha/Tantric). About 10% of them tried more than one kind of treatment or did not take any specific treatment. There was no difference in the system of medical treatment chosen for girls and boys (Table V.26).

In the course of their study, the Pune team for instance, found some information that is contrary to what the above tables portray. In Pune, when the team asked the mothers of the sample about the methods of medication used for girls and boys, the majority of cases claimed that they went to private practitioners for both. However, detailed inquiries revealed that girls were not usually taken to private clinics.

At first they reported the parents would adopt the 'wait and see' policy. If the girl suffered for an extended period, then she was treated with home remedies and later taken to the local healers. Only if her illness still persisted, was she taken to a private practitioner as a last resort. When asked, the mothers denied that they neglected the girl child and claimed that medical help for their daughters was sought immediately. However, the girls contradicted their mother's claims by saying that they were never taken to the doctor. They said that they were taken to temples where ritual articles were offered to the deity and after that they were taken to the local healer. The discrepancy in the statements of the mother and daughter illustrates the possible neglect of the health of the girl child.

Table V.26

Method of Medical Treatment - Boys and Girls

Method	Percentage Boys	 Girls
Traditional/home remedies	1.7	2.1
Allopathic	76.0	83.6
Ayurvedic/Unani/Homeopathic	2.4	2.4
Ojha/Magic Healer/Tantric	0.9	1.0
Acupuncture	0.1	0.1
No specific treatment/more than one treatment	9.7	10.4
N.A./D.K.	8.9	0.5

One of the research teams took a look at the number of girls and boys who were brought to the Out Patient Dept. of the local Hospital and found that the ratio of girls to boys was 1:2. Empirical verification of this kind is useful, as a counterpoint to reported statements, but we do not have such internal checks from every team.

General Appearance of Girl Child

The project teams attempted to judge the health of the girl child by an informal study of her general appearance. This observation did not require any special training on the part of the observer. Different aspects of the girl such as skin, hair, nails and so on were noticed and are discussed below. The following tables are based entirely on the observations of the participating team. As the team members were not specially trained in clinical diagnosis or to get this kind of information, many have tended to use the 'N.A.' category.

It was found (Table V.27) that only 18.6% of the sample had normal skin, while the rest in the other categories varied in condition. It is also apparent that the researchers felt that the categories developed did not cover all possibilities, and thus we have the percentage of "any other" at 67.8%.

Table V.27

Skin

Skin Type	Percentage
Normal/smooth	18.6
Dry	2.7
Pigmented	2.7
Pale	1.3
Scratches	1.0
Blisters/Boils/Infections	1.2
Any other	67 8
N.A.	4.7

Table V.28

Lice in Hair

Lice	Percentage
No	52.6
Yes	15.1
Probably	24.1
N.A.	8.2

Hair hygiene is related to both attitude to cleanliness and the opportunity to keep clean. Parasites in the scalp seem to affect about 40% in the sample of girls.

From the above table (V. 28) we can see that a little over 50% of the girls did not have lice in their hair but almost 40% came in the "yes" and "probably" categories.

Table V.29

Hair Colour

Colour	Percentage
Normal/Healthy	50.4
Black/Brittle	6.3
Dry/Brownish	38.7
Grey	1.5
Any other	0.1
N.A.	3.0

The appearance of hair can be a good indicator of a person's vigour and tone. In this sample, about half of the girls were reported to have healthy hair (Table V. 29).

And how was the hair maintained? Again, this would be an indicator of general health and sense of well being, as well as of course, access to the resources of water and time.

Table V . 30

Hair Condition

Condition	Percentage
Well groomed	67 . 4
Unkempt/dirty	25 . 4
N.A.	3 . 8

Table V. 30 shows that about 67% of the girls had neat and well-groomed hair, while 25 . 4% had unkempt/dirty hair.

Assessment of the cleanliness and appearance of hands, nails and feet were also done informally by the research team.

Table V . 31

Condition - Hands, Nails, Feet

Condition	Hands (Percent)	Nails (Percent)	Feet (Percent)
Healthy	71 . 2	65 . 1	62 . 2
Dry or dirty	24 . 9	31 . 0	37 . 7
N.A.	-	4 . 0	-

It was found that a little over 70% of the girls had clean and healthy looking hands while 25% had dry and dirty hands. From the table above (V. 31) we can see that 65% of the girls had healthy/clean nails, while 31% had dry or dirty nails.

It was observed that 62 % of the girls had clean/healthy feet while about 38% had dry and dirty feet.

While planning the instruments for the assessment of the health of the girl children we realised that an intelligent appraisal of the general appearance, the activity level and cheerfulness and friendliness of the girl child could be combined. To assess these, one would not need any specialised training. Even accepting that reliability of such assessment would tend to be moderate to low, it was decided to consider "the sparkle in the eye" as a measure of the sense of wellbeing.

Table V.32

Glow in Eyes

Glow in Eyes	Percentage
Yes	78.0
No	17.0
N.A.	5.0

It was found that 78% of the girls were reported to have a sparkle in their eye while 17% were reported as not so describable (V. 32).

Table V.33

Activity

Activity	Percentage
Normal active	86.8
Not active	8.0
N.A.	5.2

Almost 87% of the girls seemed to be normally active, while 8% seemed less active (Table V. 33).

Table' V.34

Cheerfulness

Cheerfulness	Percentage
Smile	89.6
No smile	5.8
N.A.	4.6

Almost 90% of the girls seemed cheerful while 5.8% did not. The researchers were generally greeted with a ready, friendly smile by the girl child.

Taking these three simple field assessments, the large majority of girls do appear to be bright, active and cheerful.

Environmental Factors: Hygiene and Sanitation

Environmental factors play a very important role in the maintaining of good health. In both the urban slum and the rural areas, the amenities are not evenly available to all, with some households being placed in a more advantageous locale. Certain areas are cleaner than others with houses that have more rooms, separate kitchens etc. This may have an effect on general health, with better location and more space, making families less prone to frequent infections and chronic diseases. Stagnant water and the lack of proper toilet facilities are invariably characteristic of the poorer homes (about 50% of the entire sample). It is well known that these factors may result in serious health hazards. Apart from the surroundings of the house, the amenities of the house such as clean drinking water are equally important. The chapter on Area Profiles gives the reader a first hand description of some of the environments in which girl children live.

Chapter VI

MENSTRUATION

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Chapter VI

MENSTRUATION

Gender differences that are culturally produced have often been interpreted as being rooted in biological factors. A clearly biological event, the onset of puberty, not only introduces dramatic physical changes but brings on several social changes too in the life of a girl. In many Indian languages, menstruation is equated with 'flowering' or blossoming (and privately, it is often referred to as a curse).

Age at Menarche

In our sample, it was found that nearly 40% of the girls had reached puberty.

Table VI. 1

Age at Menarche

Age at Menarche	Percentage
Less than 10 years	0.2
Between 10-11 years	1.4
Between 11-12 years	5.5
Between 12-13 years	12.8
Between 13-14 years	11.9
Between 14-15 years	5.9
Between 15-18 years	2.2
Not yet menstruated	60.1

In this analysis, the specific questions aimed at menarche and puberty rituals were asked of only those girls who had attained menarche which was approximately 40% in this sample - 4800 in number. Thus all the statistics in this section refer only to those 4800 girls and are not based on the entire sample.

The age of attaining menarche does reflect health and nutritional status. As is well known, in developed countries, the age is being constantly moved forward. In India, there are norms of the ICMR which put the mean age of menarche in India at 13.5. In this datum (as in others like longevity) there are bound to be secular trends i.e.. change in trends over the years. In our sample, about one-third of the girls attaining puberty were 12 years old, and another third of them, 13 years old; and the distribution was near-normal.

Prior knowledge of Menarche and Source of Information

The following tables present data regarding any prior knowledge the girls may have had about the onset of menarche and the source of that information.

About 37% of the girls state that they did have prior knowledge of menarche, while 63% of the girls say that they did not have any prior information about it. The majority of the girls seem not to have even informal education about the functioning of their own bodies.

Table VI. 2

Prior Knowledge of Menarche

Prior knowledge of Menarche	Percentage
Yes	37 . 3
No	62 . 7

However, one cannot fully rule out the possibility that the girls were being a little shy or modest in answering the questions. If they had said that they did have prior information, some probing questions would be bound to follow. There is a possibility that some of the respondents considered that to act innocent, or ignorant, was a wise course of action.

Table VI. 3

Source of Knowledge

Source of Knowledge	Percentage
Friends/Neighbours	18 . 5
Mother	14 . 0
Other female relative	10 . 3
Mass media	1 . 0
Teachers	0 . 8
No prior knowledge	55 . 4

In Table VI . 3 we see that friends/neighbours (18 . 5%) were often the source of information on menarche and related aspects for the girl child. The mother was the next most common source (14%) followed by the girl's sister or other female relative (10 . 3%). The observation that there is a lack of intimacy and articulation of shared issues in the family is supported here. The mother's role is surprisingly low-key in such a crucial aspect of the girl child's health and well-being.

How Menarche was Handled

The girls who had attained menarche were also questioned on how they handled the onset of menarche.

Of the 40% girls questioned, nearly 63% went to someone for help. A further 27.6% said that they took care to protect themselves and 10% said that they had been mentally prepared for the event. The latter two categories can be added to arrive at the number of girls who had prior information on what to expect and what to do as is confirmed in Table VI. 2.

Table VI. 4

How Menarche was Handled

How Menarche was Handled	Percentage
Informed others	62.4
Took care to protect myself	27.6
Was mentally prepared	10.0

Table VI. 5

Persons Helping the Girl Child

Persons Helping	Percentage
Mother	71.2
Sister/Sister-in-law	12.5
Friend	5.5
Other female relative	3.8
Others (neighbour, teacher, doctor)	2.5
None	4.5

When the girl child attained menarche, the mother (71.2%) was found to be the primary helper in the majority of cases. The next largest category was the sister/sister-in-law (12.5%) followed by friends (5.5%) and other female relatives (3.8%). Although the mother has some hesitation in preparing her girl child for menarche, its onset sets her in action and she does the needful.

Feelings and Problems of the Girl Child at Menarche

The girl children, on being asked how they felt at menarche, provided a number of responses, including that they felt scared or shy. Some disclaimed any feeling.

The most common feeling experienced by the girl children was that of feeling frightened (24%). This was followed by 23% of the girls feeling shy; 34 . 5% of the girls felt nothing, or were not sure how they felt. Other feelings experienced were mentioned as dirty (6 . 8%) and uncomfortable (7%).

Table VI. 6

Feelings at Menarche

Feelings at Menarche	Percentage
Frightened	23 . 8
Shy	23 . 1
Dirty	6 . 8
Uncomfortable	7 . 0
Grown up	4 . 8
Nothing/not sure	34 . 5

As far as menstrual problems were concerned the majority of the girls questioned said that they did not have any problems during their periods.

Table VI. 7

Problems Faced during Periods

Problems Faced	Percentage
No	75 . 2
Yes	24 . 8

About 75% of the girls said that they did not have any serious problems during their periods while about 25% said that they had some problems. The implication of this is that 25% of post-menarchal girls would need medical or paramedical treatment and counselling.

Table VI. 8

Remedial Measures Adopted

Remedial Steps	Percentage
Took rest at home	23 . 4
Took pain killers/medicines	27 . 0
Took home-made remedies/used hot water bottles	11 . 7
Avoided baths/avoided specific foods	3 . 6
Did nothing	34 . 3

Table VI. 8 above depicts remedial measures taken by the girls who did have problems during their periods (about 11%). About 34% of the girls reported doing nothing for menstrual problems which could imply that the problems were either minor or self-limiting. Others chose to take rest at home (23.4%) or take medicines (27%).

Some said that they took home-made remedies, used hot water bottles and avoided specific foods, associated with the aggravation of menstrual problems.

Puberty Rites and Rituals

It was a common observation that restrictions on the rules governing the behaviour of the girl child changed dramatically after she reached puberty, the girl child having become a woman and therefore more vulnerable to any contact with persons of the opposite sex. This can be seen in the tendency to group her with adult women in the family at community gatherings.

The table below shows rules that are enforced on the girl child after she attains puberty.

Table VI. 9

Rules Observed by the Girl Child after Puberty

Rules observed by the Girl Child after Puberty	Percentage
Not allowed to play	9.3
Not allowed to mix with boys/males	20.8
Not allowed to move about freely	35.1
Not allowed to dress well, go to school, etc	2.5
No restrictions	32.3

Table VI. 9 shows that 35% of the girls report that they are not allowed to move freely and 20.8% say that they are not allowed to mix around with males. The majority of the girls face sexual segregation immediately after puberty and are no longer allowed to interact even with the boys in the family. Some of the girls also had to change to a more modest way of dressing and wear conservative clothes as defined in their specific community. In many cases, after the girl child's menarche, parents began to think about her marriage and tended to be deeply concerned about her chastity and her reputation in the community. The rules prescribed were generally a function of that concern.

In several states in India, puberty rites and rituals are common. It was found that nearly one-third of the girls in the total sample who had reached menarche, did have such rituals.

Table VI. 10

Puberty Rituals Celebrated in Community

Puberty Rituals Celebrated in Community	Percentage
Yes	32 . 8
No	40 . 9
Don't Know	9 . 0
N.A.	17 . 3

From the above table, we see that 33% of the girls said that there were puberty rituals in their communities while 41% said that there were no such rituals. These summary data do not in themselves indicate the variance. It must be noted there is a great deal of variation from one region or subculture to another within the country. There is no 'Indian' pattern.

The girls were then questioned on how they felt about such celebrations taking place.

Table VI. 11

Reaction to Rituals

Reaction to Rituals	Percentage
Felt shy	12 . 8
Felt like a heroine	11 . 0
Traumatic	1 . 0
Disliked them	6 . 5
Felt grownup	0 . 8
Felt nothing	7 . 8
No celebration	60 . 1

We see that 12 . 8% of the girls said that they felt shy at the puberty rituals that were conducted while 6 . 5% disliked them and 7 . 8% felt nothing. Sometimes a girl would say that she felt like a heroine at this celebration (and about 11% of the girls fall in this category). These pubertal celebrations serve the function of a rite of passage in many communities in India and the rituals that go along with this event result in its not being treated as a 'dreaded' phenomenon by the girl child. The girl child enjoys this event as this is one of the few times in her life when she is the uncontested star of the show. She is frequently the only beneficiary of the celebrations and is often showered with attention and gifts. It is only after the ritual celebrations are over that the girl realises that the event produces uncomfortable discontinuity - that the door has suddenly closed on the childhood she has left behind.

Taboos and Restrictions

In several communities, various taboos are enforced during menstruation. Women/girls who are menstruating are considered to be polluting and are not allowed to cook, draw water from the wells, appear before male members of the family or join in worship. Restriction on food is depicted in the table below.

Table VI. 12

Restriction on Food after Puberty

Restriction of Food after Puberty	Percentage
Restricted diet (no non-veg)	4.8
Other types of restricted diets	14.0
Special diet	11.3
No change	69.9

It can be seen that almost 70% of the girls did not have any change in their diet after attaining puberty while about 20% of the girls did have to follow some restrictions in their diet.

Table VI. 13

Taboos Observed during Menses

Taboos Observed during Mensus	Percentage
Food restrictions	29.8
Isolation	35.3
Play	48.1
Worship/religious rites	78.4
Bath	6.8
Cook	23.6
Touch others	5.8
Go out/school	3.0

A substantial percentage, more than three-fourths of the girls who had attained menarche, were not allowed to join in religious worship/rites during their menses. Other taboos enforced pertained to their play activities (almost 50%), food restrictions (almost 30%), isolation (35%) and some restrictions on cooking (24%), bathing (7%), interacting with others (6%) and going out/going to school (3%).

India being so culturally diverse, no singular common pattern in the rituals, taboos and treatment of the experience of menarche can be identified. There are variations by region, by caste group and by level of modernization. Families in every community follow their own traditions — with some celebrating the onset of menarche with much ado and others not doing anything at all.

Chapter VII

CHILD LABOUR

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Chapter VII

CHILD LABOUR

Introduction

Child labour is a widespread practice in India. According to available statistics 43% of India's population are children, out of which 18% are involved in child labour. The ages of these children range between 5 and 14 years. Child labour, accordin to official statistics contributes 30% of the family earnings.

Child labour is cheaper than adult labour and some companies and individuals make huge profits by employing children and exploiting child labour. Employees seem to prefer child workers as they are productive, cheap and obedient. Also child labour is not organised into unions and children are less prone to giving the management any trouble.

Many of the jobs are gender-specific with different ramifications for girls and boys. While boys work more in the hotels and tea stalls, girls constitute 70% of child workers in the Weaving industry, and 63% in the Match industry. Other major areas where girls outnumber boys are in agriculture, bidi-making and rag-picking. It is a common observation that girls are more likely to be paid less than boys, for the same kind of work.

In the total sample in this study, it was found that 87.2% of the girls said that they were not involved in any economic activity towards supplementing the family income. This however, did not take into account girls who were involved in household work which contributed to the household occupation or to the parent's job. It also did not take into account those girls who stayed at home to tend to home-based craft work without any monetary compensation for their work. Their work is considered as their duty to the family, and it is expected to be done without any articulation of the contribution made by such work.

Thus 12.8% of the total sample did contribute towards the family income. The large majority of this 12.8% (12.0% to be exact) worked in the unorganised sector.

A major part of the girl child's earnings were spent on the family. In many cases, she did not get to keep any of the money she had earned. An in-depth analysis of the girl child and her work place was carried out.

All the percentages given below pertain to those cases which were applicable to the questions asked. In almost every category about 90% of the cases were not applicable. These percentages are based on the 12.8% of the girl children who do work.

From the table (VII.1) we see that 51.6% of the girls are engaged in agricultural labour and other related activities while 17.2% are in home-based establishment / family business. A further 7.8% are involved in domestic / personal services. Agriculture absorbs the largest quantum of girl children's labour. Since two-thirds of the sample is rural, it is only to be expected that cultivation of crops, care of cattle and related activities constitute the major occupations for which girl children receive some payment.

Table VII.1

Nature of Employment

Nature of Employment	Percentage
Industrial worker / Factory worker	3.1
Agricultural labourer / related activities	51.6
Construction labourer	2.3
Semi-skilled labourer	2.3
Home-based establishment / family business	17.2
Piece-rate workers / crafts	9.4
Service	1.6
Domestic / Personal Services	7.8
Self-employed / others	4.7

How the Girl Child is Employed

The table (VII.2) shows us that 30.5% of the girls were involved in productive activity in the home / assisting the family in their work (no separate pay-

Table VII.2

How Girl Child Employed

How employed	Percentage
Self-employed	11.7
Employed on a salary	17.2
Working with family (piece wages)	14.8
Productive activity in the home / assisting family	30.5
Casual labour	25.8

ment) and 25 . 8% were engaged in casual labour. About 11 . 7% were self-employed and 17 . 2% were employed on a monthly salary. The commonly accepted definitions of child labour will have to be re-examined in the context of self-employment and home-based work.

Type of Employer

It was found that 39% of the girls were working with Businessmen / Contractors / Landlords while 12 . 5% were employed by Individuals / Households and 0 . 8% were employed by the Government / Public sector and the same number by Private Institutions / NGO's. Clearly, the non-formal sector, businessman, contractor etc., also the sector likely to be exploitative, employs the largest number of girl children. Their employment in these cases would be without permanence and without the benefits of service in the public sector. We find only a miniscule proportion (0 . 8%) of the girls engaged in government jobs. The 12 . 5% girls working for individuals and households may be marginally better than the first group, but they are also at the mercy of an unpredictable employment set up.

Table VII. 3

Type of Employment

Type of Employment	Percentage
Businessman / Contractor / Landlord	39 . 0
Individuals / Households	12 . 5
Government/Public Sector	0 . 8
Private Industry/Factory	3 . 9
Private Institutions/NGO's	0 . 8
Others	14 . 1
Self-employed/Working with family	28 . 9

Time Spent at work

Approximately 34% work for 6 -8 hours a day while about 17 . 2% of them work 8-10 hours a day and 22% have no fixed hours. The majority of girl children (34 . 4%) who are employed work for 6 to 8 hours - a full working day and about 22% say that there are no fixed hours. These refer to jobs where an accurate sense of time is not a necessary parameter for the task. In such situations, work hours are likely to be expanded and the emoluments not specified ahead. That these are antecedents of exploitaion need no emphasis.

Table VII. 4

Time Spent at work

Time spent at work	Percentage
Less than 2 hrs a day	2.3
2 - 4 hrs	11.7
4 - 6 hrs	9.4
6 - 8 hrs	34.4
8 - 10 hrs	17.2
10 - 12 hrs	2.3
More than 12 hrs	0.8
No fixed number of hours	21.6

About 41% of the girls worked for all seven days a week. These girls worked mostly as domestic labour in households. About 27% of them do not have any fixed number of days and 12.5% work six days a week.

The location of the place of work from home is an important factor. About 20% of them work within the locality/village while 28.9% have to go less than 2 km to work and 18% of them travel 2 - 4 km to work. Approximately 19.5% of them work within the house (Table VII. 5).

A majority of the girls, 68.8%, walk to their place of work. About 32% of the girls reach their destination in less than half an hour while 24.2% take about half or one hour to reach.

Table VII. 5

Distance of Work-place from Home

Distance	Percentage
Within locality / village	20.3
Less than 2 km	28.9
2 - 4 km	18.0
4 - 6 km	3.1
More than 10 km	0.8
Within the house	19.5
Distance unknown	9.4

Table VII. 6

Time taken to reach Work Place

Time taken to reach work place	Percentage
Less than half an hour	32 . 0
Half to one hour	24 . 2
1 - 2 hours	10 . 2
2 - 3 hours	0 . 8
No fixed time/Don't know	32 . 8

Amenities

The amenities provided at the place of work were assessed and it was found that there was enough light and ventilation as most of the girls were working either as maid servants or in agricultural activities. Private toilet facilities which are essential for girls are not provided in many cases. About 30% of the girls, probably the ones working, in construction or agriculture did not have access to such facilities.

As for rest pauses provided during the working day, it was found that only 41% of them had some time to take rest. The facilities lacking for all were paid holidays, medical benefits, maternity leave, skill-based training, education and bonus.

Earnings

Table VII. 7

Cashed earned by Girl Child in a Month

Cash earned in a month	Percentage
Less than Rs. 50	4 . 7
Rs. 51 - 100	12 . 5
Rs.101 - 200	21 . 1
Rs.201 - 300	15 . 6
Rs.301 - 500	8 . 6
Rs.501 - 1000	0 . 8
More than 1000	36 . 7

It was found (Table VII . 7) that 21 . 1% earned about Rs. 101 - 200 per month while 15 . 6% earned between Rs. 201 - 300 and 12 . 5% earned about Rs. 51 - 100 a month.

About 56% were paid in cash and 21.9% do not get a separate payment, but the family gets paid as a whole, in cash or kind.

Table VII.8

Period of Payment

Periodicity of Payment	Percentage
Daily	24.2
Weekly	18.8
Monthly	10.9
Not fixed / on completion of job / No payment	46.1

The period of payment (Table VII.8) varied. About 24% were paid daily, while 19% were paid weekly and 11% monthly. The payment in 37.5% of the cases was received by the girl herself and in 16.4% of the cases by the mother. In about 46% of the cases, the parents / parents-in-law decided on how the income would be spent. About 4.7% of the girls made this decision by themselves. The major part of these earnings, almost 60%, were spent on the family. Only 3% was saved or spent by the girl herself.

Work Satisfaction

About 54.7% of the girls were satisfied with their work. Around 17.2% said that they were not satisfied; 19.5% liked working because it made them economically independent and 11% disliked the drudgery and the long hours of work.

When asked about their future plans, 27.4% said that they wanted to pursue an education and further qualify themselves.

We know that the question of child labour is a vexed one, since any decision made affects entire families. One thrust has been to make primary education compulsory and available; another has been to ban child labour. Neither proposal has been implemented, for several practical reasons.

On the part of the families, a commitment to educate girl children is still not universal. Part of the reason for this could be that education does not seem functional for them as it does not provide the skills for employment and the assurance of a better future.

The other explanation is known: that families in poverty find that to sustain themselves on the margin of survival, they have to use all the labour power they have, including that of children. This continues to be an overhanging fog on the development horizon of India.

Chapter VIII

CASE STUDIES AND CASE PROFILES

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Chapter VIII

CASE STUDIES AND CASE PROFILES

This section consists of six **case studies** and five brief **case profiles**. They have been chosen from the reports of different participating centres and are intended to give an intimate idea of the life and situation of the girl child.

The girls in these vignettes range in age from ten to eighteen years. Only two of the girls whose case studies are presented here are in school. Most of the others have been forced to leave school for a variety of reasons (early marriage, helping with household chores) or have never attended school. Taken together, the stories of these girls paint a grim picture of economic deprivation and a society with gross stereotypes of gender roles. Girls' aspirations for themselves are suppressed or ignored in the cause of social mores or of the collective needs of the family.

The six case studies presented here are reasonably detailed descriptions of the daily routine, lifestyle and opportunities of the girls concerned. The five case profiles are succinct summaries that provide an overview of the lives of some of the girls included in the study.

The section provides the qualitative aspect of the lives of girl children, to be used as a supplement to the quantitative data. As can be seen, the two aspects are mutually reflecting, each confirming the issues focussed by the other. These case studies also take us into the girl children's hopes and dreams, contrapunting their harsh reality.

CASE STUDY - 1 (Jadavpur)

Name : Pinky
Age : 18
City : Calcutta
Area : Urban
State : West Bengal

Pinky is an eighteen year old Hindu girl from Calcutta. She lives with her family in one of the colonies which houses resettled refugees from East Bengal (now Bangladesh). Pinky's family had migrated from Dhaka to Calcutta over forty years ago. Her family consists of her parents and two younger brothers. Pinky's father used to work at a factory, but is currently unemployed as the factory had declared a lock-out. It is hard for him to get another job as he has studied only upto Class 8 and has no other skills. Pinky's mother, however has studied upto Class 10 and is using her sewing skills to support the family. With the help of the father, Pinky's mother gets orders to sew aprons and overalls for various factories. This earns her about Rs.1000/- per month which is just about enough for the family's minimal needs.

Pinky's mother is extremely upset about this role reversal. She had always believed that it was a man's prerogative to be the bread winner of the family and the woman's prerogative to be at home as a housewife. She had not imagined that she would have to be the sole support of three children and her husband. These circumstances have left her quite bitter. She feels that if one has an able bodied man for a husband, he should be able to support the family; no woman should have to work after marriage. Her ideas about male and female roles are fixed. She extends these views to the kind of life she would want her daughters to lead.

As far as education is concerned, the mother's views are a little more open. She feels that girls should have higher education (at least a B.A. degree) so that they will be acceptable in today's society. However, though she professes to have an interest in her daughter's education, it seems as if she does not really pay that much attention to it. Pinky at the age of eighteen, is still in Class 10 while other girls her age are in College. Her brother who is fifteen years old is already in Class 9 and her thirteen year old brother is in Class 8. Although the siblings seem to be of equal intelligence, Pinky is lagging behind in her education. This gap can be attributed to her having to stay home on many occasions to help her mother out with household chores or with sewing orders. Pinky is well versed with all forms of sewing and knitting. This however, cuts down on the amount of time she can spend with her books.

It seems quite evident that Pinky's mother is more fond of her sons than she is of Pinky. She makes no bones about the fact that if she needed help at home, she would ask Pinky to stay back and not the boys. She wants nothing to interfere with their educational process which would ensure them job security. She feels sure that her sons will be the source of her support in the later years. When asked why Pinky couldn't do the same, she answers by saying that there is no need for a girl to get a job. She feels that girls must be married by the age of 20-22 years or else they will lose the freshness of youth. A girl should get married and live happily with her husband and not have to support her family. That is the man's job. Pinky's mother does want her daughter to be married and happy, but has decided not to spend anything on dowry. She does not object to it on principle, but says that she cannot afford it, and would rather have her daughter remain unmarried than pay dowry.

Even though Pinky's mother has stereotyped views on gender roles, she cannot put them into practice in her own home. Due to their circumstances, she encourages Pinky to earn money to supplement the household income. In their family, earning the income for survival is the task of the women.

Personal Profile of Pinky

Pinky wants to have a job when she is older. She is already helping her mother out and also coaching young children at home. She says she enjoys teaching and sees possibilities in making a career out of it later on. This is one of the reasons she wants to do well in school. She feels that an education helps one to qualify oneself better for a job in the future. It also enables one to know the world better, and have the opportunity to meet new people and make friends.

Even though Pinky wants to work outside the home when she is older, she does not want to do so at the cost of her family life. She says that when she gets married she will pay equal attention to both, so that neither one gets neglected. She knows that a paid job helps to supplement the family's income and that is why it is important for her to have a job. Pinky seems to have adopted the modern day image of a working girl. She likes school, she likes teaching and knows exactly what she wants to do when she grows up. She has had a taste of an independent income and the identity of a bread winner as well. Along with this, she also wants to get married and have a family. When asked about her perceptions of gender roles, she answers that a good girl should stay at home, be obedient and do well in school. A good wife should look after her family. A good boy should be just like a good girl and a good husband should treat his wife well. The contradictions in her thinking did not seem apparent to her. Anyway — the future is a faraway place, from her current perspective.

CASE STUDY - 2 (Bombay - 2)

Name : Vidhya
Age : 12
City : Umele
Area : Rural
State : Maharashtra

Vidhya is a 12 year old girl living in Umele, which is near Naigon in Maharashtra. Her family consists of her parents, two brothers and a sister and a grandmother. Vidhya's family is very poor and has great difficulty in making ends meet. Vidhya's father is currently working in a rubber factory, earning Rs.200/- per month. A few years ago he had a much better job in a mill and was earning quite well. At that point, Vidhya's brother was being sent to an English medium school. However, hard times befell the family, the mill where he was working closed down and he lost his job. He couldn't get a good job as he had studied only upto Class 9. These circumstances were humiliating and he would often vent this frustration on his wife and daughters by scolding or beating them.

Vidhya's mother keeps poor health. She suffers from high blood pressure and a tumour in the stomach. As a result, she is unable to contribute significantly to the family earnings. Whenever she feels well, she makes cloth quilts which fetch her about Rs.100/- a month. Vidhya and her sister work as part-time domestic servants. Her brothers are both studying and do not work on a regular basis.

Personal profile on Vidhya

Vidhya is studying in Class 6. Along with her schooling she works part-time as a domestic help in other people's homes. Her job includes washing clothes, utensils, sweeping and swabbing. She goes to work early in the morning and completes her chores. She then goes to school and during the recess, she goes back to the same house to wash the utensils. After school is over, she is back to work, from 3 to 4 p.m. Vidhya earns about Rs.50/- a month which she gives to her mother. She is given Rs.2/- out of her wages to keep for herself. Apart from school work and her job, Vidhya also has to perform household duties. Her mother does not keep very well and often the entire burden of housework falls on Vidhya's shoulders. Despite this, Vidhya manages to study for about two hours everyday. Their house does not have electricity, so she uses a kerosene lamp to study at night. Her study time is often interrupted by the demands of the household but Vidhya is persistent. She says she enjoys studying and intends to pursue her studies till Class 10. After that she plans to join a vocational training course which would allow her to get a good job. Vidhya dreams of becoming a teacher. She does not like being a housemaid. She says that though her employees treat her well, the work is rather dull and tedious.

She says that her employers give her food, clothes and so on. Vidhya shares all she gets from them with her siblings.

Vidhya is not very happy with the family situation. She says that her grandmother causes a lot of problems in the house. Vidhya's mother is the victim of constant harassment and abuses from both her mother-in-law and husband. Vidhya's grandmother is always telling her son to throw Vidhya's mother out of the house as she is an accursed person. She says so as Vidhya's mother had three still born babies early in her marriage. A possible reason for this was her poor health, but everyone in the family was convinced that it was a curse. She was taken to a Witch Doctor but her condition did not improve. Thus, she is constantly berated and beaten by her husband and mother-in-law. Her children however, stand up for her and fight with their father and grandmother to protect their mother. They take their mother out for movies and walks to try and keep her happy.

As for Vidhya's siblings, she says that she and her sister work hard so that their brothers can study. The brothers do not work on a regular basis. They sometimes make money by selling articles or papers. Vidhya's elder brother is in Class 9 and will get a regular job after he has finished Class 10. The brothers do help Vidhya out a little at home with cleaning the utensils, making chappatis and so on. She feels close to her siblings.

Vidhya's home is essentially run by her grandmother. As a result of this, her brothers are given preferential treatment as far as food and clothes are concerned. Vidhya's grandmother feels that men need strength as they are the ones who will look after the family. Thus they must be given the best. Vidhya does not protest, but feels that her grandmother is probably right. Her younger sister, Kalpana, however, feels that her grandmother is wrong. She feels that both men and women are equal and should be treated equally.

Vidhya says she has a lot of friends in the neighbourhood. During her holidays she spends her free time with them playing games, watching TV in a neighbour's house and chatting. She has never had the opportunity to travel but says that she would like to one day. Marriage for girls in their caste is usually at the age of 21. Right now, says Vidhya, she is working towards fulfilling her ambition to be a teacher.

CASE STUDY - 3 (Jadavpur)

Name : Durga
Age : 15
Area : Rural
State : West Bengal

Durga is a fifteen year old girl from a scheduled caste family. She is the third of six children. Durga has one elder brother, one elder sister, two younger sisters and one younger brother. Her elder sister was married some years ago and now there are seven members left in the family. There is a thirteen-year gap between the oldest and youngest sons. There were five daughters born in between, of whom three survived. Durga's mother openly admitted that she would not have had so many children if the two sons had been born in the beginning. She felt that a woman needed at least two sons. It was only in the hope of having a second son that she bore so many children. Durga comes from a reasonably affluent family in her village. Her father owns a substantial amount of land (about 25 bighas) and several heads of cattle. They also run a small business where they make puffed rice (muri). The responsibility for the puffed rice production has been given to the women of the family. The men stay out in the fields all day. Durga, her mother and her sisters have to boil the paddy, steam and dry it, and then puff it by deep-frying it. This process involves a lot of time and labour. Apart from this, the women work in the fields as well. The womenfolk help out in all the areas of work in the field except ploughing. In addition, the domestic chores (cooking, cleaning, care of the young and the elderly, water, fuel and fodder) are totally the responsibility of the women of the household.

Due to these circumstances, none of the daughters of the house has been able to get an education. Their duty as girls is to look after the home and to lighten the mother's load of work. School is considered a luxury which they cannot afford. The situation however, is quite different for the boy child. The boys have to be qualified enough to get a good job. Durga's mother said that her sons would be encouraged to study for as long as they could. Even though they will inherit some land, it is important that they should be able to get a job. A good job would provide a steady income, security and a better status in society. Working in the fields was not only very hard work but was also dependent on unpredictable factors such as weather. Durga's mother feels that the boys are not yet ready to do such hard work and the fields would be looked after by their father. They should put their time and effort into their education, she said.

The older son is currently in Class 9. He has been enrolled in a good school and lives in the school hostel which is away from the village. The family spends about Rs. 300/- per month on his education. When asked about her four daughters who are all unschooled, Durga's mother says, "What good is an education to a girl in a farmer's house? The only problem is that these days it is very difficult to marry off an illiterate girl. One has to pay a lot of dowry". She now wonders if she should have sent them to school for a short period of time at least. Even if they had studied upto Class 4 or 5, they would not have to pay a big dowry. Though Durga's mother realizes that education for a girl may be a good thing, she feels that there is too much work at home to allow for such luxuries. Her criteria for a good daughter-in-law are being good at cooking, being hard working and having a fair complexion. "Of what use is an educated girl in households such as ours? The women of this house have never been to school!" She gave herself as an example of an illiterate woman and felt that it had never hampered her life in any way and so illiteracy would not be a problem in her daughters' lives too. They would grow up to be dutiful wives and mothers like her. That, she felt was good enough for any girl.

In the case of Durga's family, educational discrimination is more visible but there is also a noticeable difference in the food that is given to boys and girls. The more nutritious food and the delicacies are invariably kept aside for the sons.

Personal Profile of Durga

Durga appears to be in reasonably good health. She has not suffered any serious illness so far, but is a little underweight for her height and age. Durga is about 135 cm. in height and weighs only 35 kg. She carries an expression of tiredness and resignation on her face. However, she gives the impression of being a sturdy and hard working young girl. Durga is very unhappy about the fact that her parents never sent her to school. She says that when she was young, she made many attempts to convince her parents to educate her, but was unsuccessful. She realises that her illiteracy will make it hard for her to get a good husband. She expects her in-laws to constantly belittle her and pass snide comments. To this she says, "But what can one do? If one's own parents do not want their child to study, then how does one overcome the handicap? After all it was not as if they could not afford it. Now I will never be able to teach my own children to read. And will they ever respect a mother who is illiterate?" She feels that she is too old to start studying. She and her sisters are expected to help out at home, in the fields and the business till such time that their parents decide to get them married. They seem to have accepted their condition.

Durga is different from her mother in that she is aware and angry at the gender discrimination in education. She realises that an education could have helped change her life considerably. She is vaguely aware of the possibilities that are within the reach of an educated person and feels that being illiterate is a severe handicap. However, when it comes to gender bias in other areas, she feels that it is natural for boys to have a better deal in life. She does not seem to have any objection to the fact that her brothers are better fed than she and her sisters are. In fact, she feels that boys need better treatment. After all they have to study hard and get a job to look after the family. She does not see anything wrong in women in the family eating after the men have eaten, or in her brother's mistakes going unnoticed while hers are punished. She believes that girls must be quiet, obedient and accommodating. The one quality she hopes for in her husband is kindness - "so that he will forgive my faults and not scold me all the time".

An average day in Durga's life begins at five in the morning and ends after sundown. She begins by sweeping the three rooms of their house and goes on to feed the cattle and clean their stalls before they are taken out to the fields. She then helps her mother with the cooking. After this is done, she smears the floors and walls of the house with a paste of cowdung and water. Durga also has to work in the fields. She helps with all the seasonal agricultural tasks (harvesting, threshing etc.) and with producing puffed rice.

After the morning chores, she goes out to fetch water for the house. The nearest water source is a kilometre away. She has to fetch water three times a day. It takes her about an hour to go back and forth. When she comes home she supervises her siblings' bath and meals. After everyone has eaten, her mother starts preparing the day's lot of puffed rice. After that Durga has to fetch fodder for the cattle and drinking water once again. By the time she is home, the sun has set. Her evenings are spent looking after her brother and sisters. It is only after the rest of the family has eaten that Durga and her mother have their dinner and go to bed.

Epilogue

A year after the survey, a follow up was done. It was found that Durga's life had not changed in any way. Her mother did say that she would enrol Durga in literacy classes (a district wide literacy drive was on at that time) but Durga was sceptical about it. She was concerned about who would take over her household chores. In any case, she felt that she was too old to study and she would be getting married soon, so there really was no use pursuing it.

CASE STUDY - 4 (Bombay - 2)

Name : Vanita
Age : 17
City : Bombay
Area : Urban Slum
State : Maharashtra

Vanita is a 17 year old girl, living with her family in the Vadarpada slum in Bombay. She belongs to the Dubla community. Her native tongue is Gujarati. Vanita's family consists of her parents, a younger brother and a sister. She has been educated till Class 7 but had to discontinue her studies to work. Her father was working in an aluminium factory but lost his job when the company shut down. He had been earning Rs.800/- a month. Vanita's mother worked in two households as a maid servant and earned Rs.300/- a month. As a result of her father losing his job, Vanita had to give up her schooling to help supplement the family's income.

Personal Profile of Vanita

When Vanita first started work she would go along with her mother and do odd jobs. She began by earning Rs.150/- per month per job, as well as one meal a day. Even though her mother and she worked very hard they found it difficult to make ends meet and sometimes had to go forgo meals in order to be able to feed the rest of the family. As time passed, Vanita managed to get other jobs and make about Rs.750/- a month. This made it possible for the family to have enough to eat.

Vanita is currently working as a domestic servant in five houses. Her job includes cleaning utensils, washing clothes and swabbing. She goes to work at around 1 p.m. everyday and comes back at 3 p.m. Then she goes back at 8 p.m. and returns around 11 p.m. She gets leftover food at all the five households. She eats at two houses and brings the rest of the food home to share with her siblings. Vanita gives all her earnings to her mother except for Rs.50/- which she deposits in the bank every month for herself. Her parents have no objection to this. In fact, they feel that it is good security for her future. Vanita is happy with her work situation. The people she works for, she says, treat her very well and she has managed to make a lot of friends in the neighbourhood. Whenever she gets some free time she meets them. Vanita also helps her mother with all the household chores.

Two of Vanita's friends are going to school. When she sees them go to school she feels that she has been deprived of the right to education. She says that given a chance she would still go back to school. Vanita is aware of the fact that there are some schools in which girls are entitled to free education, books and so on but she realises that she does not have the time to go back to school and it would not meet with her parents' approval.

Vanita's younger siblings - a brother and a sister, are both studying in school. She and her brother tend to have a lot of fights. Her mother always protects her brother by saying that he is younger than Vanita. When Vanita comes home in the afternoon from work, there is no food kept aside for her. It is always assumed that she has eaten at her place of work. If one of her siblings goes out and buys something to eat, they never offer any to Vanita. This neglect and indifference hurts Vanita a lot but she does not mention it to her family. Sometimes if she comes home tired from work and refuses to help with the housework, she gets a beating from her mother. Vanita feels that nobody in her family (except for her father) supports her. Her father treats her well and tries to protect her as much as he can, and she is closer to her father than she is to her mother.

Vanita does not remember when her menstrual periods began. She suffers from pain in the legs and stomach cramps when she has her periods. During periods certain restrictions are observed such as sitting apart, not touching certain things and so on. Vanita does not like these customs but is unable to do anything about them. In her employers' houses however, she does not follow any such custom as they do not appear to believe in them.

In Vanita's caste, girls get married by the age of 21 years. If a good proposal comes along, the girls are married off any time after the age of eleven. Vanita wants to get married soon and has already met a boy she would like to settle down with. He is a distant relative of hers living in the village. Her mother is against the marriage as she feels that the boy smokes, drinks and is unemployed. Vanita, however, has found out that this is not so. The boy intends to come to Bombay to meet her parents. Vanita does not plan to continue working as a maid after marriage. She would like to get a job in a factory packing pins, clips and so on. Though the wages are not as rewarding, she believes that her husband will earn well and she would only work to supplement their income.

Vanita is sad about the fact that she is not treated well at home. She feels that everyone tends to take her for granted. Whenever she sees her siblings carefree and playing happily, she regrets the kind of life experiences she has had.

CASE STUDY - 5 (Nagarjuna, Guntur)

Name : Janaki
Age : 16
Village : Nagarjuna
Area : Rural
State : Andhra Pradesh

Sixteen year old Janaki is living with her parents and siblings in Nagarjuna. She is the eldest of three children. Janaki's family belongs to a Forward Caste. Janaki was married at the age of six to her maternal uncle who was fifteen years older than her. She was sent to her in-law's house, after she attained puberty at the age of fifteen. After three months of marriage, she left her husband's house and came back home. She says that she was treated very badly by her husband. She says that he even threatened to kill her. The only person who was good to her was her mother-in-law (who was also her grandmother). However, Janaki's sister-in-law treated her very shabbily. Her husband was said to have been having an affair with another woman. Janaki said that she would rather commit suicide than go back to her husband's house.

Janaki's family is Hindu and they belong to a socially forward caste. However, they are very poor and find it hard to make a reasonable living. They live in a **kutcha** house which has electricity supply. Janaki's father is a tractor driver. Her mother occasionally works as agricultural labour to help supplement the family's income.

Personal Profile of Janaki

Janaki has studied upto Class 5 in the local village school. Now that she is back at home she wants to continue her education. She had just appeared for her Class 7 examinations privately. Janaki's father is very much against her continuing her studies. Janaki explains why. She says that as she is married, it is not socially proper for her to go into the village often which she would have to do to get her books, write examinations and so on, if she did pursue her studies. Also, if she gets through Class 10, then her educational qualifications will be higher than her husband's, which would be unacceptable to him. However, Janaki feels that education is very important and says people who are educated can stand on their own feet, develop good friendships and increase their world awareness. She wants to study further and become a teacher. She also expressed a strong desire to be trained in a skill that would allow her to earn some money.

A day in Janaki's life begins with her waking up at six in the morning. She then fetches water from the nearby well, cleans the house, washes the utensils, washes the clothes and helps out in other domestic chores. In her free time, she reads books and occasionally listens to radio programmes. In the afternoons she chats with her neighbours for some time and then takes a nap. In the evenings, she attends to the household chores again. When the family members come home, she spends time with them and attends to them and then goes to sleep by 9 p.m.

Janaki's mother is very unhappy about what Janaki has had to go through. She says that the ideal age for a girl to get married is 18 but they had to get Janaki married early because of family compulsions. She says that she wants her second daughter to be educated and employed before she gets married. Janaki's father insists that Janaki must go back to her husband's house. Her mother is scared to send Janaki back but feels that she cannot take a stand against her husband's wishes.

When asked what qualities a `good' girl should have, Janaki says that a good girl should do her household duties well and mind her own business. She should not go out much or be visible to the critical eyes in the community. She feels that obedience to parents is what is most important for both girls and boys. When Janaki was in school she used to play a lot but all that has stopped now. Girls in her family are not supposed to laugh loudly or go out alone to visit friends or relatives. Her brother however is allowed to do as he pleases. Janaki says that an ideal husband is one who does not drink, cheat on his wife or beat her.

CASE STUDY - 6 (Gujarat)

Name : Sangita
Age : 15
Village : Ahmedabad
Area : Urban Slum
State : Gujarat

Sangita Kantibai Dantani is 15 years old and living with a family of nine members in the Zoppadpatti slum in Ahmedabad. Her family consists of her parents, five younger sisters and one younger brother. The parents are still hoping for another son. The last time her mother was pregnant, she found out that the unborn child would be a girl and had an abortion. Sangita's uncles, grandparents and others live in the same neighbourhood. Her family lives in a one-room pucca house. It has a verandah with a small open space in front. The house has electricity and water supply but no bathroom or drainage. A mobile **sulabh** toilet comes to the slum during the morning hours; the residents also defecate in the open land.

Members of Sangita's family earn their livelihood by selling flowers and various flower items. All the members of the family work in the family trade. They make different kinds of garlands, **gajaras, venis, kalagis** and so on. The family earns about Rs.1000 to Rs.1500 per month. They own both a television set and a radio.

Personal Profile

Sangita is five feet tall and weighs 38 kg. She has never been to school. Her community firmly believes that there is no necessity for a girl to be educated. All they need is to be married to boys who can read and write. Most people in Sangita's family are illiterate. Only her brother goes to school. Her parents know that educated girls are not appreciated in the marriage market. It is believed that educated girls will not be submissive, obedient or hard working and would go `astray'. A commonly held view is that girls should be uneducated and be well versed in domestic work and household economic activity.

Sangita spends her whole day in household chores. She wakes up at 6 a.m. and fetches water, cleans the utensils and prepares tea for her family. Then they all go off to work and Sangita stays at home to look after the siblings, clean and cook. At noon she makes flower garlands and **gajaras** for the family trade. In her free time she chats with her neighbours. In the evening, she cleans and cooks. Sometimes she watches television for a little while.

When Sangita is given money to spend, she buys bangles and ribbons for herself. She enjoys going to fairs and festivals with other women. During the marriage season Sangita accompanies her parents to their selling place to help them out.

Sangita had her menarche at the age of 13. Her family was pleased and celebrated the event by feeding her with `Halwa' as she had entered the `Streedharma'. After `growing up' she is not allowed to talk to boys, stay out late or go out alone.

Sangita feels that all girls should be educated. She feels she is too old to study now but hopes that she will have some opportunity to learn to read and write. Her parents want her to be married soon. The custom of bride price is practised in their community. They get a small payment from the groom's side for their daughter. Sangita would like to marry the boy that her parents choose for her. She expects him to be well versed in the trade, earn well and not drink, gamble or beat his wife. Her parents want her to marry into a respectable family in their community so that their own family name will be enhanced.

CASE PROFILES

CASE PROFILE - 1 (Telengana/Hyderabad)

Name	:	Anasuya
Age	:	10
Village	:	Taglepalli
Area	:	Rural
State	:	Andhra Pradesh

Ten year old Anasuya who is four feet tall and weighs about 30 kg, lives with her family in Taglepalli village which is in the Nizambad District. Her family consists of her mother (45 years), her father and two brothers. They belong to the Scheduled Caste. Anasuya's parents have been living in Taglepalli for the past twenty two years and are both agricultural labourers who work for daily wages. Her mother was married at the age of ten and started having children soon after attaining puberty.

Anasuya's parents believe in the value of education and emphasize the importance of it in their children's lives. They attribute their financial hardships in life to the fact that they are not educated and thus have made their children's education a priority. They have even incurred some financial debts to put their children through school and college. The eldest son is completing his B.Com., the other one is in Intermediate and Anasuya is in Class 5. No school in Taglepalli has classes beyond the 3rd standard and thus Anasuya studies in a school at Varni which is about 5 km away from Taglepalli. She stays at a hostel in Kotaiya Camp.

Anasuya's parents have given her a bicycle which she uses while coming home on weekends and holidays. Anasuya's commuting on the bicycle is the subject of a lot of ridicule from the neighbourhood boys. This however, does not affect Anasuya who sees the practicality in her using a bicycle. While she is home on weekends and holidays, Anasuya helps her mother out with all the household chores. She regards these chores to be a woman's duty to her family and home.

Anasuya prides herself on being educated and talks about the importance of it. She feels that with an education she will not end up working in the fields as her parents do. Anasuya's parents want her to be educated upto Class 10 but also plan on looking out for a suitable groom for her as soon as she attains puberty. When asked why they want Anasuya to be married that early, their reply was ambivalent. They felt it would be very difficult to find a suitable boy after a certain age and their society does not approve of late marriages.

Anasuya's case profile shows a family trying to be progressive in their way of life by encouraging the girl to stay in a hostel, to ride a bicycle and to aim at completing high school. At the same time, they were an intrinsic part of a more conservative community. Early marriage of daughters is one aspect of their culture that they were not willing to change.

CASE PROFILE - 2 (Patna, Bihar)

Name : Renu Kumari
Age : 11
Village : Hathiakan
Area : Rural
State : Bihar

Renu lives with her family of seven in Hathiakan village, Bihar. She belongs to one of the backward castes. Her native tongue is `Magahi' a dialect of Hindi. Renu's father is a landholder and they live in their own house built of bricks and mud. They do not have any electrical or toilet facilities. Water is fetched from a well and food is cooked on fires of wood, or cowdung cakes.

Renu is the eldest child. She is 4' 11" tall and weighs 25 kgs. She had some early education at a Government school where the medium of instruction was Hindi. While at school she did not participate in any of the school activities. She was reported to have been very keen on her education, but was stopped from going to school after three years of schooling as she had to help her mother with household chores. Now Renu spends her day engrossed in the daily routine of a household. She cooks, cleans and looks after her younger brother. Occasionally she even helps her father in the fields.

Renu does not seem very satisfied with her state of life. She has a perpetual gloomy expression on her face as her mother treats her very harshly. She seems afraid of her parents and would only talk freely when she was interviewed in private. Renu spoke about the strong tendency of her parents to discriminate between the boy child and the girl child. Her parents felt that the son would have to be strong to earn and look after the family, and thus justified their bias. Renu said that her brother was fed with milk, curds and butter while she and her sisters would get leftovers to eat. There was a similar discrimination with regard to health and educational facilities. The son was always given priority over the daughters. The parents believed in giving the son the best of what they could afford.

Renu does not have time to rest or spend in any form of recreation. Not surprisingly, she does not seem to be optimistic about her future.

CASE PROFILE - 3 (Karaikudi)

Name : Lakshmi
Age : 15
City : Kulanthiranpattu
Area : Rural
State : Tamil Nadu

Lakshmi lives in a village in Tamil Nadu in a family of landless labourers, belonging to one of the Scheduled Castes. She is fifteen years old and works as a casual agricultural labourer. Her parents and two brothers also work as agricultural labour and the family finds it hard to make both ends meet. Lakshmi is the youngest of six children. Two of her elder brothers are married but are reported to be offering no support to the family. Lakshmi's sister got married at the age of 16 but is currently living with her parents as she had a quarrel with her husband and has left him. This sister has two daughters and a son under six years of age. Her children spend most of their day playing on the streets.

Lakshmi's family lives in a mud hut which does not have electrical facilities. Cooking is done outside the house. Lakshmi does not have any kind of formal educational background. She has never been to school and attributes it to being scared of getting beaten by the teachers in school. The youngest of her brothers studied upto the fifth standard and then dropped out saying that he was scared of the teachers.

At present, Lakshmi's father is unemployed and her mother is too sick to work. Thus Lakshmi is one of the few bread winners of the family. She leaves home at 6 a.m. and comes back at dusk. She often walks back in darkness, as there are no street lights.

Lakshmi is paid in kind which is a common practice in the villages. Her job fetches her 3-4 measures of grain per sack she collects. Men are paid 5-6 measures of grain per sack but she cannot protest the discrimination. Lakshmi also does other chores for the house such as fetching water from a distance of 1/4 km away.

Lakshmi's health is not too good. She looks very anaemic and has irregular periods. She often suffers from severe stomach pains and claims that going to a doctor has only made it worse. She uses herbal remedies to relieve the pain.

Cheerful and frank by nature, Lakshmi loves to wear nice clothes (polyester) when she goes to work. She realises that she is the support of her whole family and has to carry a heavy responsibility at the age of fifteen.

CASE PROFILE - 4 (Gulbarga)

Name : Hulligamma
Age : 13
City : Krishnanagar
Area : Rural
State : Karnataka

Hulligamma is a 13 year old girl child living in Krishnanagar. Her family is from a community that participated in the practice of the Devadasi system. The Devadasi system is a practice where a young girl is dedicated to the local temple. She is expected to have certain ritual roles in the temple festivals. She is at the mercy of the priests and the affluent men in the area, who treat her as a sex object and she is not allowed to pursue the normal life of a householder. In the larger taxonomy, Devadasis come under the category of Scheduled Castes.

Hulligamma was the second of two daughters. The older daughter, Hulligamma's elder sister had already been married off. The parents wanted a male child, since male progeny is considered indispensable for the continuity of the family name.

Her parents decided to offer Hulligamma as a Devadasi a sacrifice to the goddess Yellamma with the prayer so that they would be blessed with a male child.

Hulligamma had no choice in the fate that was forced on her. Though she had not been deflowered, she was very articulate in expressing her extreme disgust at the idea of her body being used by many men. She felt trapped in a humiliating situation.

The Devadasi practice receives a three-fold sanction : religious, familial and societal. All of it could be ignored if the families were not also in conditions of abject poverty and at the lowest level of socio-economic status and privilege.

CASE PROFILE - 5 (Mysore)

Name : Razia
Age : 15
City : Mysore
Area : Urban
State : Karnataka

Razia is a 15 year old girl from a Muslim family. She is the fifth of six children. She has three elder brothers and one elder sister, all of whom are married, and one younger sister. The household consists of Razia, her parents, her third brother and his wife. The youngest girl lives with her second brother, some distance away. Razia's father is now retired and gets a pension. The brother who lives with them earns about

Rs.200/- a week His wife, who is 15 years old, has studied upto Class 8 and helps with the housework. Razia has studied upto Class 5 in an Urdu medium school, and says that she could not continue further because of her father's frequent transfers from one place to another.

Razia was married at the age of 12 into what was supposed to be a `good family'. However, in Razia's words, she was too naive and innocent at that time. After marriage, it took her all of three days to discover that her husband was hearing-impaired and could not speak. Apparently this was not the bridegroom who had been selected by her father. Because of the custom of covering the groom's face with a curtain of flowers during the wedding, the change in identity was not discovered at the time. This discovery was a shock for Razia. She was also ill-treated by her mother-in-law who berated her for minor errors. Razia did not know how to cook and her mother-in-law often abused her verbally or physically on this account. She also harassed Razia by not giving her enough food to eat. When her mother-in-law tried to douse her in kerosene and set her on fire, Razia ran away from the house to her maternal aunt who lived nearby. Her family was then informed of the atrocities that Razia had undergone. They were horrified and took her back immediately. She has been looked after by her own family ever since and says that she feels relieved.

While at home Razia learnt to roll **`beedies'** and now earns about Rs.70/- a week. She spends most of her time working at this job and she also helps her mother with the household chores. Razia's average day goes like this. She wakes up at 6.00 a.m. and makes tea, washes the utensils, fetches water and helps with the cooking. She then works at rolling **beedies** till late at night. As and when there are demands on her for household chores, she suspends her work with **beedies** and helps out. Razia says that she would like to study and find a job that would give her a regular income, but her father does not approve. She would need to have several years of education to be equipped for a salaried job.

Razia's community, according to her, does not approve of young girls going out on their own. They are supposed to go out only in the company of family members. Girls have to be in `purdah' outside the house. She reports that males and females in the house are treated equally with respect to food, clothes and health. Razia's family also appears to be unusual in that, although Razia gives her entire earnings to her father, he saves it for her in a `chit fund' rather than spending it on the household. He also reiterates that she is free to spend her money as she pleases. He considers her happiness to be the most important thing. Razia is keen on saving money for her younger sister's wedding.

Razia's family would like her to get married again, perhaps in a few years' time, but she does not want to think about marriage just yet. Her priorities in life she says are to get her sister married to a `good person' and to help improve her family's economic condition.

Conclusion

The trials and tribulations of the girls suffering from harassment for dowry, physical violence and alcoholism of the men in the family make difficult reading. We see examples of girls married off to handicapped or chronically ill men, or deserted by the husband after the arrival of two or three children. The chilling horror of it all is that this is the dull everyday reality for many girls. The low level of opportunity for self-expression and the absence of what might be considered leisure or recreation makes life a stark and harsh experience for girls.

Chapter IX

INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES

A number of intervention programmes were incorporated into the research design and were implemented in the study sites for the project on the Girl Child and the Family. These intervention programmes were initiated by conducting in-depth interviews with the girls and the women of the village in order to identify major problems. Following this, programmes that would help ameliorate the situations were introduced.

The four basic areas covered by these intervention schemes were:

a) Literacy and Education
b) Gender Awareness
c) Health
d) Environment and Sanitation.

Literacy and Non-Formal Education

Several of the collaborating centres took up action programmes in the area of literacy and non-formal education, in response to the needs of the community. Specific cases are discussed below.

The action programme in Telengana region, A.P. was organized in collaboration with voluntary agencies. Nizamabad, like other districts of Telengana region, continues to be a district where the social beliefs and practices support and reinforce the subordination of women. The practice of identifying and dedicating **Jogins** is a degradation. A prepubescent girl, usually from among the poorest families in the village is dedicated to become a **Jogin** and then has to become a prostitute to the community and undertake ritual tasks that are degrading and humiliating in several ways. The voluntary agency in the area holds a bi-weekly gathering of women for raising their awareness of their condition. Literacy classes for women, especially for **Jogins**, are held regularly giving them access to the written word. The women's acquisition of information, knowledge and literacy skills empowers them to perceive their subordination and to resist their condition.

Most women of this region were very keen that their children should have an education. There was a lot of interest in having a school which would give both formal and vocational education. A consensus that a school be set up in that neighbourhood was reached. Subsequently, the buildings were nearing completion and the school was expected to start functioning soon. The National Institute of Social Action, Hyderabad and a voluntary agency in the area were engaged in planning programmes that could benefit women and girls. The research team of the Women's Studies Centre also participated in these neighbourhood activities.

Gopanpally village in Rangareddy District, A.P. is about 25 kms away from Hyderabad city and within walking distance of major educational, research and industrial institutions. Nevertheless, it is rather underdeveloped. The team decided to hold a recreational workshop for children, consisting of games, story-telling, kite-making and nature walks around the village. The Councillor and the Youth Club members helped the proceedings by organising some food for the children. The student volunteers went to the primary school and engaged the children in singing, story telling and story reading. The older children had suitable games and craft activities organised for them. There was much dancing and singing of film and folk music.

Other action programmes in this area included a local voluntary organisation's cultural troupe, which arrived announcing itself with drums and songs. The troupe taught everyone songs about the importance of literacy for women and girls. There were discussions with women on education, marriage and size of family. All the women who participated in the activities expressed a desire to learn to read and write. As part of the National Literacy Mission, an instructor was appointed in the village. This has led to Gopanpally being adopted by the NSS unit of the University of Hyderabad. A full fledged literacy centre runs there now and there are plans to build a library and community centre.

In Tirupathi, a socio-economic survey was carried out by the research team in the village "Sri Venkatapathi Nagar". Based on the survey, courses in sericulture, basket weaving, tailoring and embroidery were taught to the women of the village. These vocational training programmes were organised by the Mahila Mandal. Literacy activities were also initiated at the university extension centres. Lectures and films that create awareness on issues such as legal rights, family planning, health and sanitation were arranged.

In Bihar, the research team noticed that there was no ICDS (Anganwadi) Programme operating in the village. The team put in a request to the concerned officials to start the programme. They found that the women of the village were eager to learn crafts which would give them a vocational skill. Girls and women who were aspirants for the training course were identified. The team met the Director of the District Rural Development Agency, Patna and applied for the induction of training courses in **sikki** work, tailoring, embroidery and candle-making for the girls and women in the village. Other Government Departments were being contacted for training programmes in installing smokeless **Chulahs** and hand pumps. Thus the presence of the research team acted as a catalyst for energising the entire system.

In Ahmedabad, Gujarat, some of the girl children of the village, Zaloda, pressed the team to teach them reading and writing, which the team did using their adult education kits. Later, this task of continuing the girls' education was handed over to the Anganwadi workers.

In Gulbarga, Karnataka, the Centre for Women's Studies, the NSS units of womens's colleges and other colleges under Gulbarga University, took up the responsibility of eradicating illiteracy in one village. A festival for the girl child was organised in a slum in Mysore City. Children took part in art activities and presented songs, dances and skits. About 400 children participated.

In Maharashtra (Rajgarh), efforts were made to check the reason for girls dropping out from school. As a support to their school activities, the girls were mobilised to start a library in their village.

In Orissa, in an under-developed section of Berhampur town, it was found that most of the women had never attended school and that girls in the age group of seven to eighteen tended to discontinue their studies in order to work. The team organised meetings in collaboration with the school teachers and parents for generating awareness about the importance of education for girls.

In Tamil Nadu, the team organised a skill training course throughout the Karaikudi Municipality, for girls who had dropped out of school. In collaboration with two voluntary organisations, the team selected prospective trainees and trained them for three months in carpentry and screen printing. An exhibition was arranged at Pudukottai in collaboration with a voluntary organisation. Topics such as female foeticide, female infanticide, child marriage, employment opportunities, law and policies for women were highlighted using posters, audio-visual aids and slogans.

Gender Awareness

The core of the problem of the subordinate status of the female is that it is internalised by men and women in the culture. Gender awareness programmes must therefore make a strong thrust if the intervention is to have any effect. A variety of methods were used by the research teams.

In Maharashtra, there is a traditional festival generally attended only by married women. The Pune research team arranged such a programme for all categories of women including widows. The idea of doing so was to make them all feel welcome and to attack the concept of a "stigma" attached to widowhood. Gradually, the women opened up and started talking about their problems. Several meetings were organised later to discuss the issues raised by them. One of these was the genetic basis for the sex of the infant. The XY chromosome factor was explained and the women were surprised to hear that the sex of the child is determined by the father's genes. The practice of chastising the mother for producing a girl child was discussed in that context. The equality of sons and daughters was stressed as an ideal that could be practised.

In Telengana (A.P.) the team organised a workshop where the women discussed several issues including marriage, size of family and girl's education. A local voluntary group organised two street plays, one on the problems of early marriage, and the other on the significance of literacy and education for women, getting a lively response.

An awareness camp was organised for mothers and girls under the auspices of the local Mahila Mandal. The Mahila Mandal members were cooperative and publicised the news about the meeting well in advance. At the meeting many issues were discussed openly. Problems of dowry and harassment by in-laws, the status of the girl child, gender discrimination at school and in work and wages were also discussed.

An exercise in making women's lives visible was carried out by the team. Equipped with a tape recorder and camera they went around the houses in the village taking photographs and recording their conversations with women and girls. That most women were contributing productively and that they wanted to acquire more skills and be relieved of the drudgery of their daily chores became apparent to the community.

In the Telengana region, girl children were actively involved in a children's workshop which was organised in Gopanpally village. Women who assembled had a discussion on marriage, size of the family and other pertinent topics.

The Delhi team organised several activities in which raising awareness of gender inequality was the major agenda. Meetings, discussions, poster-exhibitions, film shows — all these methods were used to make the girls focus on the subjective aspects of their low status in the family.

Health

A large number of interventions by the research teams centred on the improvement of the health status of women and children. Some examples from the participating teams follow :

In the villages in Pune, the team organised meetings for women where they explained to them about the sex of the child being determined by the chromosomes of the father. The team also arranged a health camp at Pimpri with the help of a voluntary organisation working for community health. They put up poster exhibitions on nutritional diets, health and hygiene, family planning and immunization.

The team also organised functions at Parbhani with the local youth group and presented a slide show on nutrition. They showed documentaries on alcoholism, early marriage and so on. Discussions based on the visuals were held with the girls of the community.

In the village Chinapalakaluru, A.P., a health camp was held. Posters about immunization and family planning were put up, medical checks were done and appropriate treatment was given. In another health programme, a panel discussion on poverty, marriage and population control was held, with a doctor and a geneticist participating.

In Tirupati, lectures by experts on health and sanitation were organised and films on family planning were also shown.

In West Bengal, in village Phulmalancha, a health and immunization camp was organised with the help of the Panchayat Pradhan. Issues on women's health, family planning and birth control methods were discussed in a meeting of farmers and their families.

In Bihar, at village Danapur, an immunization camp was organised by the team. In collaboration with the Patna Family Welfare project, a baseline survey was made of girls and young women regarding their awareness of the importance of family planning and its impact on the health of the mother and child. It was found that official concern for health was related to a woman's reproductive functions and not to her sense of well being. Even then, gynaecological complaints are sometimes neglected or ignored, out of shyness or lack of confidence. The girls thus get less than adequate medical attention.

The team from Delhi made health interventions in many of their research areas. They took the help of a voluntary organisation and the Primary Health Centre to organise health camps for the community in U.P. The health programmes consisted mainly of lectures and illustrated talks which dealt with topics such as child marriage, child motherhood and immunization, with an effort to mobilise the women to gain more control over their own lives. In addition, a medical team was present to personally attend to individual complaints. A day-long immunization camp also run by the health personnel of the sub-centre, with the initiative provided by the research team.

The health camps and individual counselling revealed that women were generally suffering from anaemia and hypotension (low blood pressure) which may have been due to under-nutrition, overwork or frequent pregnancy.

In Baroda, as part of the health care and immunization programme, illustrated talks were held for children. One-to-one talks and group discussions were held with paediatricians and community workers, on the issues of health care for children.

In Karnataka, in Mandya district, a traditional feast for women and girls was arranged with the help of Mandal Pradhan and the Assistant Director of Women and Child Development. Since the idiom of the function was familiar, women and girls assembled with eagerness. After the feast, women's problems were analysed and a health check up was conducted.

In Karaikudi, Tamil Nadu, an exhibition on female foeticide, and female infanticide was arranged at Pudukottai in collaboration with a voluntary organisation. This was well attended and stimulated discussions in the community.

Environment and Sanitation

One of the major areas where the people have some control is that of sanitation. The immediate environment and its hygiene can be maintained by a well organised community without any extra investment.

In order to create awareness among rural children and women, the Women's Studies Centre at Tirupati had arranged lectures and discussions on health and sanitation. Films on environmental pollution were also shown.

The Bihar research team's visit had a salutary effect on one of the villages. In the village of Danapur Bhusaula in Bihar, sanitation facilities were found to be minimal. Hand pumps were not in working order, and water was generally fetched from a large tank in the village, which had not been cleaned for a long time. The majority of women were poor, especially those who worked as agricultural labourers. Due to the efforts of the research team, two dry latrines were constructed for the women, new hand pumps were installed and three new wells were dug to ensure clean water supply. Two old wells were also cleaned and renovated and the bottom of the village tank was cleaned and fenced. This demonstration of self help made a great impact on the community.

Issues pertaining to health and hygiene were discussed at women's meetings and health camps by the Delhi University research team. In Bawai, the team met the women of two neighbouring villages in a public meeting. The preliminary meeting was attended only by eight to ten women, who were mainly the office bearers of the Mahila Mandal. However, the final meeting was attended by over fifty women, children and men. The topics discussed varied from protection of forests and agricultural produce, to women's rights, marriage and health of women. The discussions were lively and the audience participated freely. There was also a display of posters and pictures.

In Ahmedabad, Gujarat, the team demonstrated the construction of a smokeless **chulah** and created interest in the same among the families in the village. In Baroda, voluntary agencies, field staff, paediatricians, community workers and University teachers acted as resource persons for programmes on hygiene and sanitation.

In Gulbarga, the University team served as a liaison between the people and the Govt. They focussed on the need for health services for the people.

In Maharashtra, in a slum area of Jaikalwadi, discussions were held on several problems of the women. The steps to be taken to prevent scabies and diarrhoea in their children were also explained.

In a village adjoining Berhampur, Orissa the location of the cowsheds was discussed by the research team in the context of the environmental cleanliness and a decision was made to relocate them.

In a neighbouring village, the research team took the help of the Sarpanch and along with the village youth club, cleared some mosquito-breeding stagnant pools and the people were made to feel more responsible for maintaining the level of hygiene in their own village.

In the village of Katingia where dysentry and gastroenteritis were common ailments, discussions on their causes and remedies were held. The research team talked to parents about the importance of safe drinking water, proper sanitation and clean surroundings. Rehydration therapy was also a part of the instruction. The team advised the mothers on procedures which would help to purify the drinking water. Thus every opportunity was used to convey information on environmental sanitation and to give the community the confidence to deal with its own problems.

Conclusion

A number of intervention programmes were initiated in the villages that were used as study sites for the project on the Girl Child and the Family. The task was a difficult one as the project team consisted of educated people from urbanized areas going into rural sites and interacting with the people there. People from cities are not always welcome in the rural areas as their lifestyles usually differ. One of the members of the project team described what they did to overcome this. "While conducting our interviews, we stayed in the village for two weeks at a stretch. This was done about three times in three months. This helped us to establish rapport with the residents. Many informal sessions with the women of the village helped us understand the specific problems of women". This enabled the University team to plan appropriate intervention schemes.

The way that the planning and execution of these intervention programmes was carried out was described thus by of one of the members: "While conducting our indepth interviews with the girls of the village we started identifying the issues for which programmes would be most effective". They then proceeded to initiate programmes that would help ameliorate the situation.

The four basic areas covered by these intervention schemes were **Gender Awareness, Health, Literacy and Education and Environment and Sanitation.** The project team realised that the village women did not just want a mention of these broad topics but wanted in-depth discussions on them and related issues too. As one of the team members reported - "It was clear that the women did not just want inputs on health from us". Their major interest was in the issues faced by the girl children of the village i.e. neglect of the girl child, sex-determination tests, teenage pregnancies, child marriage, superstitions, branding of the girl child on different parts of the body, dowry-harassment, sexual molestation and the high rate of school drop-out among the girl children.

The methods used in educating the rural families were interactive lectures and discussions, films, poster exhibitions and so on. One of the most effective methods was using cultural programmes to highlight the problems (and their solutions) of the girl child. This included the use of folk-lore, folk songs and drama.

The four basic areas of intervention will be discussed in separate sections below :

Gender Awareness

Efforts made to improve gender awareness included the organisation of a number of recreational workshop and lectures where women were free to discuss their problems. Some of the topics discussed in an open forum were problems faced by women who had to live with the "stigma" of widowhood, discrimination between males and females, dowry harassment and so on. Awareness camps were organised to educate the community about the genetic basis of the sex of the child. They were informed that it was the male's Y Chromosome that determined the sex of the child and thus the mother was not responsible for it.

Apart from these discussions and lectures, there were street plays enacted which focussed on the theme of early marriage and the significance of literacy and education. It was found that drama served as an excellent medium for presenting these issues. As one of the team members stated, " The animators were excellent! Their style of presentation interspersed with role-play, songs and stories was appreciated a great deal. They did not give a boring speech on the girl child. Instead, they utilized folklore for their purposes of bringing the theme to the foreground. They used satire, humour and word play to make their point clear. This encouraged a lot of women to open up and relate their problems to us".

Health

There were several intervention programmes which centred on the improvement of the status of health of the women and children in the villages. In conjunction with local voluntary agencies, poster exhibitions, films and slide shows were organised which concentrated on issues of health, hygiene, immunisation, nutritional diets, family planning and so on. Along with the exhibitions, films and slide shows, there were also illustrated talks and open discussions on the above issues.

A number of health camps were held in many of the villages where doctors were brought in to give free health checks and health advice to the villagers. The project team also carried out a survey to see how many of the girls and young women were aware of the importance of family planning and birth control. They were also asked if they knew about the impact of the mother's health and nutrition on the baby's well being. These health camps were sometimes extended to children in the schools. Illustrated talks and demonstrations created an awareness in children on topics such as child marriage, early motherhood, immunisation and so on. There were also health camps for children.

In most cases, the major health problems pertaining to women were identified as anemia, low blood pressure, malnutrition, fatigue due to overwork and frequent pregnancies. Often, women and girl children tend to ignore their ailments and health problems due to shyness or lack of confidence. Thus, they generally get inadequate medical attention.

Education and Literacy

Many efforts were made to improve the status of education in the villages. One such effort was to eradicate social beliefs that lead to the subordination of women. One of the team members reported, "The first thing we talked about was the different roles played by various family members. We tried to get information from the group about the different kinds of unrecognised work that the woman does in the house. Through this they realised that the girl child and woman do more than their male counterparts. Then through songs we tried to explain that roles can be changed and why it is important that they be changed".

In one of the centres, it was found that the mothers were very keen that their children should get a good education. There was a lot of interest in opening a school which would give their children both formal and vocational education. This request was agreed upon, the research team was able to convince the local government and it was decided that the school would be opened soon.

Many recreational workshops were organised for the children. Activities in these workshops included art and crafts, games, story-telling, drama, kite-making, nature walks and so on. The animators played a big role in involving the children in the ongoing activities. "They told stories of girls working in fields, a princess who saved a king, a peasant who gave his land to both daugthers and sons, a girl who struggled hard to become a doctor and so on". While narrating these stories the animators sought the children's involvement by asking them questions and stimulating them to complete portions of the stories. They also taught the children songs on gender justice. These methods kept the children enthralled in the activities; at the same time they were learning about the injustices that the female child suffers and to protest against them. In some cases, they were asked to write essays on the topics relating to the girl child, which was followed by spirited discussions.

There were also a number of workshops, lectures and poster demonstrations held to illustrate themes such as female foeticide, female infanticide, child marriage, child labour and so on. Laws and policies for women were highlighted by the teams. There were plans for building community centres, libraries and vocational training centres at some of the villages. In one of the villages, bi-weekly meetings and literacy classes were organised for the women of the village in collaboration with local voluntary organisations. Some of the topics discussed were marriage, size of the family, women's education and so on. It was interesting that the women who participated actively in these discussions expressed a desire to become literate.

Environment and Sanitation

In order to create an awareness amongst the rural women and children on issues of environment and sanitation, a number of lectures were organised. The topics discussed in these lectures were home management, health and sanitation. Films were shown on environmental pollution and other relevant themes.

The project team made a physical effort to improve the conditions of sanitation in the villages. In one of the villages the team helped construct two dry latrines for the women. The research team provided the initiative and installed new hand pumps, dug new wells, and cleaned out old wells and stagnant pools around the village.

The research teams discussed health and hygiene, rehydration thereapy, protection of forests, clean environment and women's rights and also served as a liaison between the government and the people.

Overall, the intervention programmes went off successfully, although the project teams did have their difficulties. One of the members related the frustrations that had to be faced in some villages. "As none of the officials were available in the village, it was difficult even to get their permission to use the village noticeboard to announce our meeting. When we wished to examine the village census records of the population, we faced virtual non-cooperation. The Gram Panchayat Office was always closed. If it had not been for the help we received from an Anganwadi worker, we would not have been able to organise the programmes".

Some of these interventions were just beginnings. However, taken as a whole, they do give an indication of what is possible if educational institutions and voluntary organisations get involved in poor rural and urban communities with a programme focus on the girl child.

Chapter X

AREA PROFILES

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Chapter X

AREA PROFILES

This study has attempted to look at the current situation of the girl child: opportunities, privileges, disadvantages, discrimination. However, it is meaningless to abstract the girl child from her environment. The society and community in which she lives, and the family environment in which she is raised, all play major roles in shaping her life. Moreover, the geographical area from which she comes also determines, to a large extent, how she spends her time and what activities fill her day.

Given the wide cross-section of geographical areas from which the girl children in this study are drawn, it was thought prudent to summarise a few area profiles so as to give an idea of the setting of their lives. The statistical tables elsewhere in the study give an overall idea of the situation of the girl child in India. The area profiles in this chapter, profiles of selected areas in Northern, Southern, Eastern and Western parts of the country, help provide the reader with a picture of the actual area in which their daily life is embedded and the various environmental conditions that may be responsible for the opportunities in the life of the girl child.

The area profiles are presented under the following headings:
a) Rural underdeveloped area b) Rural developed area and c) Urban area.

RURAL UNDERDEVELOPED AREAS

Dhakwa - Varanasi, U.P.

Dhakwa was chosen as a low female literacy village from an underdeveloped district.

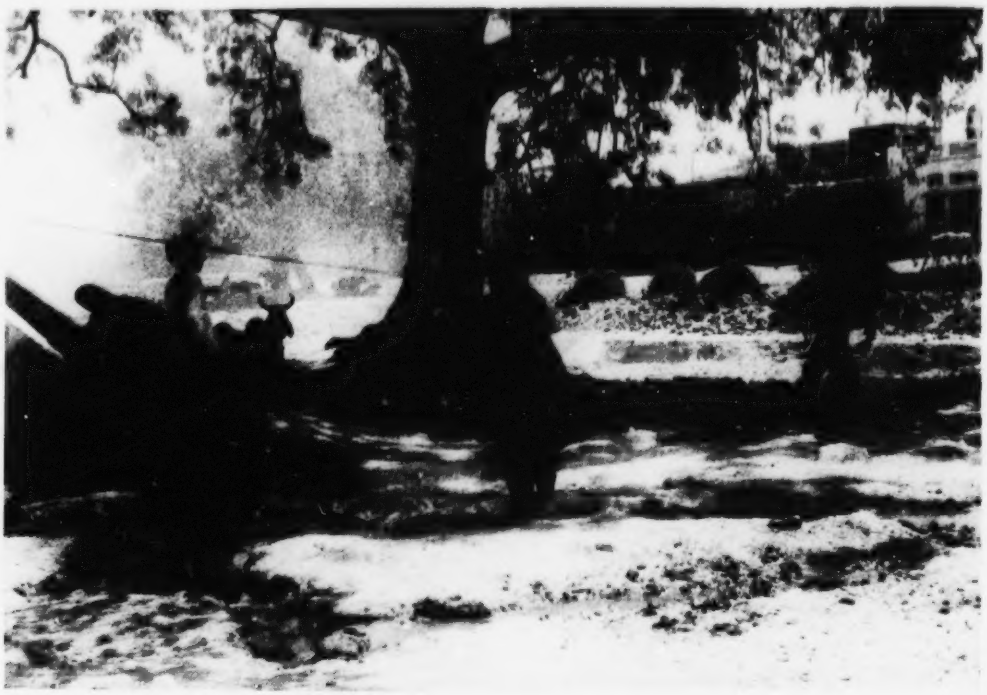
The nearest city is 5 kms away. The village comprises seven hamlets, which are widely dispersed. Only a few are served by roads; the others are approachable only by narrow and uneven paths. The total area of the village is 28,855 acres, and it comprises 271 households. The total population of the village is 1623: 830 male and 793 female.

The literacy rate of this village is 24%, which is lower than the State level (41 . 71%). The female literacy rate is 10 . 71%, far lower than the State (26 . 02%) female literacy level. There is only one primary school in the village, with 135 students. Children have to go to neighbouring towns or cities for further education, and while boys are sometimes sent to schools outside the village, girls are seldom given this opportunity.

The nearest hospital and clinic facilities are available one km. away from the village. Immunization, maternity and child care facilities are available 1.5 kms away, and a government hospital as well as traditional medical facilities are available in Sultanpur, 5 kms away.

Handpumps and wells are the main source of drinking water. Only two of the hamlets of the village have handpumps installed by the Government.

The main occupation of the people of the village is agriculture. Some own land, but other are landless and work as agricultural or non-agricultural labourers. Most women and girls are involved in household activities or on family farms. Wages are paid either in cash or in kind. People in one of the hamlets are engaged in the brewing of illicit liquor. Men, women and children work together in this activity. The children, therefore, do not attend school.



Many crimes in the village go unreported, especially those against women.

Wheat and rice are the staple foods of the village. The village is situated in a flood-prone area. Two of the hamlets, situated on the banks of the river Gomti, are flooded almost every year during the monsoons.

Tubewells in the village promote the irrigation and farming of agricultural land. Both state and private tubewells are operational in the village.

Several developmental projects are being carried out in the village, such as the Indo-Dutch Tubewell Project, the Indo-Canadian Fertilizer Project and the Plant Protection unit. The Government provides a subsidy for toilets, smokeless **chulahs** and bio-gas facilities, but not many people seem to be aware of the existence of these amenities. The village has a functioning Gram Panchayat, but female participation is negligible. Due to inadequate educational facilities and the need for girls to help on farms or in the household, girl children, by and large, do not attend school.

Gopanpally - Telengana, A.P.

Gopanpally village is about 10 km away from the national highway and is nestled behind the vast expanse of the University of Hyderabad. The village is about 20 kms away from Hyderabad City.

Gopanpally village has about 200 households. The principal occupation of the village is agriculture, aside from which some inhabitants also work as stone crushers and construction workers.

The village has electricity but faces severe water shortages. There is a Fair Price shop and a Post Office located in the village while the nearest Police Station, Telegraph Office, Bank and Railway Station are all 5 kms away at the Mandal Headquarters in Lingampally.

The approach road to the village is **pucca**. Gopanpally has a bus service connecting it both to the Mandal Headquarters as well as to Hyderabad City.

There is no Primary Health Centre or sub-centre in the village. All medical treatment is attended to at Lingampally where a private doctor runs a clinic for a few hours every morning.

Gopanpally village has a Govt. Primary School upto Class 3. There is also a Literacy Centre there which is a part of the National Literacy Mission. A Secondary School as well as an ITI and a Junior college also function in Lingampally.

Though the Gopanpally village is situated behind the University of Hyderabad and several men of the village work as daily wage labourers on the Campus, the proximity of the University has had no significant impact on the village, not even educationally. The Navodaya School which is located on the University site and about 1000 yards away from the villages, is remote and inaccessible to the children of the village. Ironically, Gopanpally village is part of Serilingampally Mandal which has over 34% literacy and ranks as one of the most developed Mandals in Ranga Reddy district. Within this Mandal's compound there are several educational research and Central

Government undertakings. However, these seem to make little difference to the development of Gopanpally.

Keshwar - Gulbarga - Karnataka

Keshwar is a small village in Yadgir taluka of Gulbarga district. It is about 50 km away from Yadgir, and 8 km away from the nearest town, Gurmitkal. Keshwar is a dusty little village covering 508.64 hectares of land. Its population is about 1608, with an equal number of men and women. Most of the houses in the village are made of mud and stone. There is one big tank in Keshwar which serves as the main source of water for the residents. Summers are very severe in Keshwar and the tank often dries up. During the rainy season, it floods over. Nevertheless, this tank is the only spot of beauty in the entire village.

Keshwar does not offer many amenities to its inhabitants. People often have to go to the nearby village Gurmitkal in search of necessities such as medical help. Keshwar has no Primary Health Centre and the Auxiliary Nurse Midwife is 4 kms away in a village called Chanderki. In Keshwar there are no doctors and the ANM is not always traceable. The Government hospital is 8 kms away and there is no easy way of getting to it in the neighbouring village. Pregnancy and childbirth are often unattended, and an emergency delivery of a baby is obviously a great risk.

Transport in and out of the village is a problem. There are crowded KSRTC buses which pass through the village every now and again, but are not reliable. Sometimes they are overcrowded and at other times they do not stop at the village at all. Most of the villagers own cattle and make their daily earnings by selling milk. In order to sell milk they need to go to Gurmitkal for which they have to depend on public transport. They wait at the bus stop from 4.45 a.m. to catch the 6.15 a.m. bus. Most often, these buses do not stop at the village and people have to walk a distance of 8 km to Gurmitkal just to sell their milk. Many a time, the milk gets spoilt because of the heat and is not suitable for consumption. This is financially devastating to the milk sellers.

Keshwar has fifteen wells. Six are meant to have electric pumps fitted to them. In reality, the electrification of the wells does not work and this poses a great problem to the families. Lampposts and tanks have also been installed in the village. However, the lampposts give no light and the tanks give no water. The tanks have yet to be fitted with taps. There is one community toilet which has not been used, as a goat had died there when it had just been built. People continue to defecate in open spaces, not far from their living quarters.

Keshwar has an Anganwadi and a Primary School which are both housed in the same two-room school building. Teaching goes on simultaneously for all the classes in the same two rooms. Two, sometimes three different classes are held in the same room and the only way the teacher can get heard is by shouting louder than the other teacher in class. This results in a great deal of noise, which poses a real challenge to knowledge acquisition. A high number of girl children drop out at the Primary level. Approximately 121 males and 74 females attend middle school at Gurmitkal, but not a single girl in Keshwar has completed Secondary education.

The overall literacy level of Keshwar is 8 . 84%. Female literacy is as low as 0 . 66%. The primary reason for this very low level of female literacy is that 80% of the girl children are married off by the age off ten. "Cradle marriages" are also very common. The people of Keshwar follow the custom of `bride-price'. The extent of poverty in Keshwar results in the parents coveting the money of bride-price and giving away their daughters in marriage while they are very young.

Keshwar has no provisions for a community centre or for any entertainment.

Hathiakan - Bihar

The village of Hathiakan is in the district of Patna. The total area of the village is about 60 acres of residential land and 2015 acres of wasteland. About 5 acres are used for grazing purposes and there is a village pond.

Hathiakan has a population of 5267 people out of which 2767 are males and 2500 are females. There are 610 households in the village and the density of the population is 460 per acre. The village population has a majority of Hindus with a minority of other religious groups.

The village is rich in horticulture of which the main products are vegetables, especially potatoes and onions. The village does not grow any kinds of cereals at all. The residents usually sell potatoes and onions to buy wheat and rice for everyday needs. Although the main occupation of the residents of Hathiakan village is growing vegetables, some people work in nearby towns in the service sector. Some are also employed in the Railways, Hospitals and other Governmental and non-Governmental organisations. A number of them work as casual labour on a daily wage.

Hathiakan consists of seven `tolas' or habitats scattered in the middle of farm land. Some tolas are approachable by a **pucca** road while others only have mud roads leading to them. The nearest post office is about 1/2 km away. Other important facilities such as Telegraph, Police Post and so on are in the nearby village of Danapur. There are branch offices of Punjab National Bank and the State Bank of India, which are about 3 kms away, and a Fair Price Shop about one km. away.

There is a Government Canal near the village, but it is mostly dry. It has water only during the rainy season. Drinking water comes from wells and hand pumps. About half the number of hand pumps are privately owned. There are about 25 private and 25 government hand pumps and about 50 wells in the village. Toilet facilities are available in very few houses.

There is no hospital in Hathiakan and people have to travel to Danapur to avail of medical facilities. Both in the Railway Hospital and the Military Hospital sophisticated medical facilities are available. The village has a Primary Health Centre and there are also Veterinary services available.

About 1787 people in the village are literate, while 1380 females and 980 men are non-literate. There are five schools at Primary and Middle levels. There is no provision for pre-school education in the village and the ICDS seems not to have reached there. There are High Schools in Danapur, Khagul, Sarai and Nargada which are nearby villages.

RURAL DEVELOPED AREAS

Umele - Maharashtra

Umele, a wetland area located in Vasai taluka is in the Thane district. The total population of this village is about 5233 people, comprising 613 households. The population is composed of families from a variety of religions: Hindu, Muslim, Christian and others. They co-exist together, peacefully. The total agricultural land of Umele is around 370 acres. The major occupations of the people are agriculture, animal husbandry, small scale industry and working in the service sector. Those who own farms work on them with the help of their families and others either work in the fields as agricultural labourers, or move on to other jobs outside the village. It was noted that 3493 of the village residents were literate.

In terms of infrastructural facilities, Umele has electricity, but only nine connections are available. The village has a main road which leads to Naigaon and Vasai. It has a few small-scale industries. There is a Post-office, a Telegraph office, a Fair price shop and a Bank. For other facilities, the people go to the neighbouring village Papadi, or to the town Vasai, which is about 7 kms. away. Water is available from nine public taps and five private taps. There are seven wells in Umele and one handpump. Both private and public sanitation facilities are available, some with and some without water. The village also has a **pucca** approach road which leads to the village and ends at the village square.

Umele has no Government hospitals and not even a Primary Health Centre. These are available only in Vasai. However, according to reports 100% immunisation has been achieved in this village. School teachers and Gramsevikas help run the family planning campaign and take the adults to Vasai or Naigaon for treatment.

Educational facilities in Umele consist of an Anganwadi, a primary school and a middle school. High schools and colleges are all in Papadi, Vasai and Naigaon. There are many voluntary organisations and institutions that operate in the village. Some of these are Shramik Mahila Mandal, Sevadal and Gram Yuvak Mandal. The women of Umele seem quite educated; a number of them go for higher studies to Bombay. Quite a few of them work in Bombay or in the periphery of the city. The general population seems to be quite influenced by the proximity of a big city. They encourage both their male and female children to pursue higher education. There are also many marriages of personal choice in the community, which appear to be quite easily accepted.

At present, the in-migration in the periphery of the village is increasing. The tribal people of Thane district constitute the main chunk of the migrant population. This section of the village is characterised by poverty, lack of sanitation and inadequate public facilities.

While Umele would be considered a developed village, given the statistics as a whole, there are still wide differences in the access to resources. A girl child from the migrant tribal group would find herself at a disadvantage on many counts.

The possibility of some families in a developed area being at the low end of privilege and with no control over natural resources cannot be ruled out. The example of the tribal families in Umele bears this out.

Anei - Varanasi, U.P.

Anei, a village in Varanasi district, was selected as a high female literacy village from a developed district for this survey.

According to the 1981 census, the village covers an area of around 13,500 acres, with a total population of 1668 persons living in 262 households; this survey 12 years later listed 350 households.

Anei is well-connected; a tar road cuts through the village and connects it to Jaunpur. There is a frequent bus service connecting the village to other areas and most of the village streets are **pucca**. Post Office, Bank and Telephone Services are available. A circular road that will encircle the entire village is under construction. Anei has a Gram Panchayat, a Nav Panchayat and a Co-operative Society.

The village has both Hindu and Muslim households, and several Hindu castes are represented. Agriculture, service, business, petty business and labour are the main occupations. Girls and women are most often involved in household work, while some engage in spinning and others run bangle shops and tea shops.

The village has access to medical facilities within a radius of 10 kms. For more serious problems people go to Varanasi, 36 kms. away.

The village has had a primary school for girls since 1904, and this has been subsequently upgraded to the eighth standard. The school was set up by a child widow, who appointed teachers from the village to staff it. This has encouraged many families to send girls to school. Besides this, there are several private schools, a **"madrasa"** (a school for religious instruction in Islam) and an Intermediate College. The percentage of female literates is 40%. This is higher than the district level (31 . 85%) and the State level (26 . 02%).

The irrigation needs of the village were served by a canal till 1950, when tubewells started supplementing it. The village was electrified in 1960 and almost all houses have electricity. A drinking water tank was built in the village in 1930. Wells and handpumps are the main sources of drinking water. Recently, water pipes and taps have been fitted and it is expected that water will soon be supplied through these.

Several Government programmes have been implemented for the betterment of the people. Thirty-three one room houses were constructed for members of the Scheduled Castes. Apartment blocks and roads have been constructed under the **Jawahar Rojgar Yojana.** The Gandhi Ashram in the village introduced a scheme to train women to spin. There is a scheme for handicapped children but no one is making use of it. Some widows receive pensions. According to the police station at Baragaon, there are no reported crimes against women from this village.

All these factors point to one thing: that Anei is a well developed village and provides a stable and favourable environment for the growth and development of the girl child. Girls in this village appear to have more opportunity for education than most.

Gunar - West Bengal

The village Gunar was chosen for this survey as a high female literacy village from a developed district. The village covers about 425 acres of land, of which about 400 acres are cultivated. The residential area covers around 15 acres.

The village is built on a slightly elevated land mass, sloping down towards the main road about half a kilometre away. All the roads within the village are extremely narrow, and permit travel by foot or bicycle only. This is a flood-prone area, and a heavy shower is enough to make the roads so slushy and muddy as to render them almost unusable.

Houses are clustered largely according to caste, and most of the houses are **kutcha** or made of mud, thatch and improvised material. The village is electrified, though the voltage at all times is low and there are frequent power-cuts.

Only 13 acres of the 400 acres of cultivated land are irrigated. The main sources of water for irrigation are ponds, water tanks and shallow tubewells. Of ten existing tubewells, three have been disconnected by the Government. The Government Canal and electrified deep tubewell are non-functional, and the river next to the village is dry for most of the year. Drinking water comes from seventy-six handpumps, of which six have been built by the Government and the rest are privately owned. Water for all other purposes comes from the fifteen ponds in the village, only four of which are used for irrigation.

The closest Primary Health Centre is situated in a village 5 kms away, and the nearest Government hospital is at Raina II, also about 5 kms away. There is a Primary Health Centre, in a neighbouring village about half a km away.

There is an Anganwadi (ICDS Centre) within the village as well as a co-educational primary school. The nearest high school is half a kilometre away and the distance to the nearest college is 7 kms.

The total population of the village is around 1229 (according to the 1981 Census) of which 656 are male and 573 female, residing in 212 households. The settlement is predominantly Hindu, with about 33 households of Scheduled Castes and 30 households of Scheduled Tribes. Most people work in cultivation (as owner-farmers, share croppers or agricultural labourers) although there are also a few businessmen and men in salaried jobs.

The village Panchayat is very active and has implemented the following programmes: a) IRDP & RLEGP, b) afforestation c) advancement of irrigation d) production of High Yielding Varieties and e) relief operations. Almost all the children are enrolled in school, and attend either the village primary school or the high school in the neighbouring village, although there are a few who have dropped out. Adult literacy classes are now being held under the National Literacy Programme and have received widespread support.

Gunar is a fairly affluent village. It is well connected by road and rail to many towns in the region, as well as to Calcutta. Schools and colleges are within easy reach and can thus be availed of by both boys and girls, since economic conditions are not a constraint in most cases. All these are likely to be positive influences on the condition of the girl child. One major problem appears to be the flood-prone nature of the area. During the rains, the village roads are practically unusable, making schools inaccessible and increasing the school dropout rate among girls substantially.

URBAN AREAS

Karaikudi - Tamil Nadu

Karaikudi is the most populous town in the Pasumpon Muthuramalinga Thevar District situated in the southern region of Tamil Nadu. It is an urban area with high female literacy. The population of this area is about 3505 people: 1707 males and 1798 females. The majority of the population is Hindu with a few Muslim and Christian families. The predominant community here is that of the Chettiars, whose ancestral villages are spread in and around Karaikudi. Most of the people residing in this area are professional or in the service sector. There are some businessmen and self-employed persons as well.

The total geographic area is about 80 acres. The soil in Karaikudi has hard red laterite and is not suitable for agriculture.

The town of Karaikudi is about 1/2 km away from a main metalled road. Within the area there are both **kutcha** and **pucca** roads. The main mode of transport for the residents is the town bus and service to and from the bus stop to other areas is provided by autorickshaw and cycle rickshaw.

Most of the houses in Karaikudi are **pucca**. Some houses are both **kutcha** and **pucca** and there are a few huts too. There is a primary school with a Balwadi in the town and a co-educational Higher Secondary School and a Girls' Higher Secondary School at a distance of 1 km. There are also five high schools, a Co-educational Government College, a State University, a Polytechnic Institute, and Engineering College and a Central Electro-Chemical Research Institute.

There is a Municipal Maternity Centre which functions in this area. The Government Hospital is about 1/2 km away and there is a Siddha Medicine Centre (Indian Medicine) attached to the hospital. There is also a community health worker in the area. Apart from this, there are three private clinics and a number of private doctors running clinics in their own houses. Most of these are about a kilometre away from the centre of Karaikudi.

There are many water connections inside the residential houses. Karaikudi has two wells and one public water tank which are used for household purposes only. The town has 6 public municipal water taps, 262 tap points for domestic purposes and 8 points for non-domestic purposes.

The town of Karaikudi has electricity, but not all homes have access to its use. There are only 379 domestic connections, 99 street light connections and two industrial connections. Facilities such as Post Office, Telephone and Telegraph Offices, Fair Price Shop and Banks are all within the radius of a kilometre. A market open everyday is also about 1/2 km. away. There are also 6 cinema halls, 2 playgrounds, 6 private community halls and a public library.

Gulbarga - Karnataka

Gulbarga city, a survey said, has the highest number of slums. The district of Gulbarga is considered to be one of the most backward districts in Karnataka. Most of the slum dwellers of this area are employed as domestic servants, construction workers, factory workers, rickshaw pullers and auto-rickshaw drivers. These slums lack the basic amenities in spite of being in a city with access to urban facilities such as hospitals, schools, health centres, social welfare offices, voluntary organisations and so on. They have little idea of the Government schemes which are meant for their benefit. They do have an idea that banks may give them loans for certain things but no one has the time to tell them what those things are.

Even though the slum dwellers are entitled to certain benefits, they are not recipients of it. They say that schools charge them fees and that Government hospitals do not give them free medicines. They are treated with indifference everywhere. They have no source of entertainment in their area. There are no community halls, sports facilities, cinema or television.

Many of the people live in one-room huts and the size of their families ranges from three to ten. There are no facilities for drainage, water or electricity. The toilets are a breeding ground for disease. Malaria and elephantiasis are not uncommon, even though there is a Health Office in Gulbarga for the eradication of Malaria.

Calcutta - West Bengal

Calcutta was chosen for the survey as the urban area with low female literacy. There were 100 households in the sample, 50 of which were from slum areas and the other 50 from non-slum middle class areas. The ward covers about 3.2 sq. kms. and has about 10 kms. of paved roads.

The slum chosen for the survey has a mixed population of Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and Buddhists. The houses are built extremely close to one another. Some are **kutcha** and some **pucca**, but most are a combination of the two. Generally they have just one room, which is used for everything including cooking and bathing. There is an acute shortage of drinking water in the area - handpumps or corporation taps are few and far between. The entire ward has only about 120 public taps, each serving about 30 households. (Each of the houses in the non-slum areas has individual tap points provided by the Government). Public toilets are also very few in number, and each serves 50-60 slum households.

The non-slum area has wide, paved roads and the residents live in large **pucca** houses or apartments. There are three primary schools, six middle schools and eight high schools in the ward. Enrolment in school varies sharply according to whether children come from slum or non-slum areas.

There are no Primary Health Centres or Government Hospitals within the ward. There is however a private nursing home as well as a hospital which serves the Port employees. There are several private practitioners and accessible clinics in the neighbouring wards. In addition a mobile medical service is operated by the Calcutta Metropolitan Development Authority.

The total population of the ward is 46,244 (according to the 1981 census) of which 29,936 are male and 16,308 are female, residing in 12,209 households. Most of the residents of the non-slum areas are in service or business. Residents of the slum area are involved in several types of occupations — petty business, trading, daily labour, carpentry etc.

The ward is under the jurisdiction of the Calcutta Municipal Corporation and is represented by one elected Councillor. Some employment generating schemes have been begun by Government authorities but the system does not function very efficiently.

A sharp contrast is evident between the slum and non-slum areas of the ward. In the non-slum middle class areas, the development of the girl child is not being hindered in any obvious manner. She generally comes from a well-to-do family, is healthy, well-looked after, enrolled in a privately-run school and has the opportunity to participate in extra-curricular activities. At the other end of the scale, the girl child from the slum areas is undernourished and overworked at home, as she takes on the burden of both housework and sibling care. She lives in the most unhygienic of surroundings. Obviously, school attendance suffers; only about 60% of the girls are ever enrolled in school, and most of them drop out after the primary or middle level.

Chapter XI

CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The chapter is presented in three parts :

Part I	Findings of the Study
Part II	State Policy and Programmes : An Overview
Part III	Directions for Action

PART I - FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The Household

Some of the major data regarding the demographic profile of the families can be summed up as follows :

More than 85% of the families claimed Hinduism as their religion, while 7% claimed Islam and the rest were from other groups. Out of the sample, 26% were from Scheduled Castes and Tribes. About 29% of the families had agriculture as the main household occupation, while agricultural labour and other manual labour together constituted about 16% of the sample. Most of the families (about 70%) had no subsidiary household occupation, while the rest were in business, piece rate work or crafts.

More than 80% of the families owned their homes, however modest. In the total sample about 56% owned no land; about 7% owned more than five acres while the rest had marginal holdings of agricultural land. Likewise, 63% of the families owned no livestock, while 24% owned milch cattle. Almost 75% of the families owned no agricultural implements and only about 1% of them owned tractor, pumpset etc. Among the families 54% owned no conveyance, while 33% had bicycles and 10% had scooter or moped. Regarding audiovisual equipment, about 37% of the families owned nothing, while 27% had a transistor radio and about 30% owned a television set. About half the entire lot of families had no household appliances, except the minimal cooking pots.

Regarding the benefit received or seen to be received from Government programmes, about half the number of families seem to have been reached as a whole. About a third of the families felt that there was no benefit from Government schemes. This proportion of non-beneficiaries (or such perception) went up to 60% when it came to income-generating schemes. Again, about half of all families claimed no benefit from health or children-oriented programmes. More than a third of the total sample said that there was no benefit from any educational programme, and this proportion of non-beneficiaries went up for

Housing programmes. About half of all the families had been reached by at least one Welfare scheme. However, the positive impact of development schemes on income was reported by about 21%, while about 60% said that there was no impact. The same question regarding impact on health had a response of no impact from 41% and another 42% accepting that there was some impact. About the same proportion of families accepted that development schemes has some impact on education. Altogether about half the families seem to be out of the range of development programmes of the Government, while about 21% of the families say that development programmes had an adverse impact due to problems in implementation and to corrupt practices.

Regarding socio-economic status of families, several variables were assessed. While 80% of the families owned their own homes, the range of rent paid was from Rs.50 to Rs.200/- with only about 4% of the entire sample paying more than Rs.1000/- p.m. The number of rooms in dwelling varied from one room (26%) or two (34%) to three (19%). About two-thirds of all families had no source of drinking water within the house, while about 25% had a tap. For all the families, drinking water was available in the village, or within a distance of 2 km. Fetching the water is shared by members of the household, but continues to be a female prerogative for about half of all the families.

While electricity was available in 95% of the areas, about 30% of the families did not have it in their homes. For about 25% of the families, a flush latrine was available in the home while 54% of the people had no toilet facilities at all. Almost 80% of all families used wood, coal, dung or kerosene as fuel for cooking and only about 17% had access to more modern fuels.

About 72% of the families were nuclear in structure and another 11% had one or two dependent members staying with the nuclear family. Only about 17% of all families were either joint or extended. Most families have 5 or 6 members and the average number of children that mothers in the sample have is 3.4. About 89% of the households had intact families, while 10% of the adult women had gone through divorce, desertion or widowhood. Only 0.5% of the girl children fell into the category of being divorced or widowed.

The age of the fathers in the families ranged from 30 to 55 years, while the mothers ranged from 25 to 45 years.

The literacy status of the families was as follows :

While 31% of the fathers were not literate, 57% of the mothers fell into that category. The large majority of fathers and mothers did not go much beyond the Higher Secondary stage; while about 13% of the fathers had educational qualifications beyond that level, only about 3.5% of the mothers did.

On the question of father's occupation, 10.3% were unskilled labour in diverse areas and 10% were agricultural labour. Other categories were skilled workers, marginal farmers and those working in regular jobs. Among the mothers, about 20% were agricultural labour and about 7% were in home-based crafts, while a majority (more than 60%) were not working for a wage. Most of the work is in the unorganised sector with its attendant traits of low job security and marginal wages.

About 55% of the fathers (of the girl children) have an income ranging from Rs.300 to Rs.1500/- p.m. About 65% of the mothers do not work or do not have an income, while those that do work earn generally between Rs.100/- to Rs.300/- p.m. About 30% of the mothers (three-fourths of the number that work for a wage) are paid in cash.

Most families (72%) have two male earners, while about 39% have one female earner. About 12% of the families have a girl child earning and about 10% of the families have a boy child earning. Total household incomes range from Rs.500 to Rs.3000/- with the per capita income ranging from Rs.100 to Rs.600/- p.m.

About two-thirds of all the families had no debts, while a little over 20% of the families owed between Rs.1000 and Rs.10,000/-.

This bird's eye view of the demographic data locates our average family clearly in the lower rungs of the SES ladder.

Socialization

Talking about children as a category leads to confusion, since boys and girls have quite different life experiences. It should now become a truism, as the findings of this study are analysed.

The birth of a girl child is desired and celebrated only by 2% of the families and the proportion is constant across socio-economic and educational levels. If there is one cultural trait that cuts across barriers of religion, region and caste, it is this devaluation of the girl child.

A description of the daily activities of the girl child reveals that about 55% of the families eat together, but about 34% of the girls eat only with their mothers. Housework is an activity that about 78% of the girls share with their mothers. About 28% girls get skill training from mothers and about 8% share time with mothers in occupational tasks. The same proportion of girls (8%) spend home-work time with their mothers and fathers, but that is all. Recreation, fun and play are not activities shared by girls with their parents. The father withdraws from most interactions and opts out of being a relevant parent.

There is a great deal of gender segregation within the family with household tasks like sweeping and cooking being unambiguously female tasks. Socio-economic status does make some difference to the time girl children spend on their studies, but the time spent by girls on housework and cooking varies only very slightly with economic status. Boys and girls in the same family seldom play together.

On gender differences in rewards and punishments, there was nothing very noticeable; nevertheless certain sub-samples did reveal that girl children got rewarded significantly fewer times.

The girl child's life is physically and metaphorically circumscribed. If she has to go out at all she has to be accompanied by a family member or go in a group. Regular trips to school, market or clinic have to be made but it is seldom that the girl child is permitted to go alone anywhere. There is a little relaxation of social rules related to parental levels of education. A higher level of occupation or education (within the span selected in the study) reduces the percentage of girls feeling restricted, but it does not do away with "rules". The boys enjoy more freedom in every sphere, including paradoxically in making friends with the opposite sex!

The girls feel that the value for their education will disappear once they are married, as being educationally accomplished is not an admired attribute for a daughter-in-law! The girl child knows that with marriage her choices get even more restricted.

The girl child does a multitude of tasks, but in characteristic self-depreciation considers them to be "unskilled" jobs. Nevertheless, where skills are learnt, they are learnt from the mother or from friends or occasionally from school.

The household tasks which only girls do (and not boys) are in order of time spent, sweeping (72%) cooking (65%) fetching water (43%) cleaning (42%) and child care (33%). Given the time involvement of girl children in the sustenance and maintenance tasks, it is not surprising that their schooling and acquisition of occupational skills suffer.

Education

School attendance of girls is influenced by the socio-economic status of the family as well as the level of development of the village/district/urban area. On the whole 61% of the girl children were attending school while about 17% had dropped out and 21% had never attended. The rural-urban split of this was quite clear with 56% of rural girl children in school compared to 74% of urban girl children. The level of development of the district as well as the literacy level influenced girls' school attendance. The proportion of girl children in school also went up with the caste hierarchy.

About 60% of the girls entered co-education schools and about 18% entered girls' schools. As a variable, the kind of school did not become a strong predictor for retention, although girls schools had an edge. About half of all the girls entering school had the school in the village or locality; for about 21% school was within a distance of 2 km and for about 7% of the girls it was within 5 km. Distance from school did not influence the rate at which children dropped out.

Most of the children in school had instruction in their mother tongue (56%) and about 7% were given education in the medium of English. Most schools are not endowed to provide extra-curricular activities to all the children. Except for games, in which about half of all girls participated, and some music and dance - there was hardly any activity. Even when a facility like a library existed, it was used regularly only by some children.

Parental attitudes on the educational levels to be ideally attained by boys and girls were ascertained. The gender difference in the expected direction persisted.

When asked why girl children did not attend school at all, only about 7.4% of the mothers' responses were that the family was too poor to provide an education. For dropping out of school, mothers cited both poverty and the lack of motivation of the girl child as reasons.

When examining the rate of dropping out at different ages, no clear pattern emerged, but when the class in which the child dropped out was taken into consideration, it became clear that Class V, Class VII and Class X were the end-points for discontinuing education. Parental levels of education had a linear relationship to girls' attendance of school and as the mother's level of education went up the proportion of girl children in school rose dramatically. Predictably, the same kind of relationship of girl children attending school could be seen with father's occupation and income.

The girl child seemed to have a better chance of being in school if she was first born. However, since the girls in our sample were first born in 65% and second born in 20% of the cases, smaller family size does become a positive input into the girl child's school attendance.

When the girl child was asked why she liked school, about 25% mentioned the chance for improvement of knowledge and skill and 17% mentioned the opportunity to make friends. It is apparent that however inadequate the school, the girl children on the whole enjoyed the experience of attending it.

For studies, most of the children had some help from the father and a little help from the mother and other relations, but about 30% of the girls studied on their own and about 14% had a tutor to help them. Their occupational aspirations are conventional (28% wanting to be teachers) but many were not decided. The mother's attitude to the girl's future also affects her school attendance. When both parents are convinced about the importance of educating the girl child, she has a much better chance of being in school.

The girl children are quite realistic in assessing the advantages of education and the disadvantages of illiteracy. About 50% of them say that education helps in personal development and self-confidence and about 50% say that illiteracy results in a low self image.

Health

Data on the health of the mothers was included in this sector. The mean number of children per family was 3.4 and about 50% of the mothers had three or four children. Almost 50% had their first pregnancy before the age of 18. Only about a third of all the mothers had regular health checks and inoculation of ATS.

The same proportion (about 50%) of mothers got their children immunized against BCG, DPT and Polio. There was a direct relationship between the father's education and the percentage of girl children immunized.

Regarding the girl child's nutritional aspects, the very beginning of nutrition - breast milk - was studied. The duration of breast-feeding of 90% of the total sample of mothers is distributed almost evenly in four periods : 1 year, 18 months, 2 years and over 2 years. It appears that mothers did understand the value of feeding breast milk to their infants. Milk and cereal supplements were generally started after one year — though the pattern varied.

For the large majority of children the main meal consisted of cereals, pulses and vegetables, and they had two or three meals a day. Some light snacks between meals were not uncommon. There was no marked gender discrimination in the kind of food or its frequency. Children who go to school carry their lunch or come back home for it. Only about 5% of the children reported having a school lunch.

While all the members of the family eat together in about a third of all families, generally there is no specific order and the situation governs it. However, when probed, it became apparent that women and girls were never the first to eat, and men and boys never the last to eat.

The preferred school of health treatment is what is currently mainstream medicine. Hospitals and clinics which follow the allopathic system are used by the majority of families. There is no apparent difference between boys and girls in attention to health problems.

About two-thirds of the entire sample of girl children had good skin and hair condition, as well as acceptable condition of hands, nails and feet. The hygiene and appearance of the other one-third reflects poverty and lack of access to water. On the whole, the girl children seemed bright, cheerful and active.

Menstruation

About 40% of the girls children in the sample had attained puberty, the large majority between the ages of 12 and 13. About two-thirds of the girls had no prior knowledge of menarche, but were helped by the mother, sister or other female relatives to deal with menarche. Most of them did not have any major health problems. There were some restrictions on the girl's movements after puberty and less than one third of them reported that there were no restrictions. Many of the communities studied did have some puberty rituals, the reactions to which varied. While some feeling of shyness was expressed, a few girls reported enjoying the rituals where they were treated as special.

The domain of th '- life in which the taboos were prominent was that of religious rites and visits to shrines. It extended to food handling in many cases. While some girls were discouraged from playing games, a small number also had to be isolated from the family during their periods.

There were regional differences in puberty rituals and the post-pubertal rules, with the Southern states tending to have more traditional practices in this matter.

Child Labour

Only about 13% of the girl children in our sample were part of the labour force. They worked in the unorganised sector, mainly in agriculture and related activities. The girl child helped in the productive activities at home, and also worked as casual labour for a wage, or as part of a family team.

Building and road construction as well as agricultural absorbed them. The working hours varied but the majority worked for 6-8 hours a day. Their earnings also varied, but the largest category was of those earning Rs.100 — Rs.200/- p.m. being paid daily or weekly. The work place was usually within a 2 km. radius, which could be reached by walking for half to one hour.

The amenities at the work place were minimal, yet having known nothing better, most of the girls said they were satisfied with them. In many cases, the girl child's work was with family members and her wage merged with the payments made to them. Whatever the girl child earned went to the family and only occasionally did she have a savings account or buy herself anything.

Lack of right over natural resources and non-availability of permanent employment are two factors which are clearly antecedent to poverty. When families are very poor they cannot and do not plan for a distant future. Sustaining themselves at a survival level takes up all their energy. The labour of girl children is to be seen in this context.

The Case Studies and Case Profiles as well as the Area Profiles provide the flesh and bones to the skeleton of statistical description of the sample. They take us into the homes and tell us how girl children think and feel. The interventions that have been tried out indicate what is possible when the higher education system serves as a catalyst for development.

PART II - STATE POLICY AND PROGRAMMES : AN OVERVIEW

One cannot write a conclusion to the report without taking a look at the Governmental efforts that aim to make the developmental process more effective, by ensuring its linkage to the grass roots and by being gender - sensitive. The paradigms of development have changed over the last few decades: We now see the terms "people's participation", "women's empowerment" and "growth with equity" used widely in policy statements.

The Indian Constitution has empowered the State to adopt measures of positive discrimination for neutralising the cumulative disadvantage suffered by any group. Women fall in such a category and Article 15(A) (e) makes it the fundamental duty of every citizen to uphold the dignity of women, by condemning any practice derogatory to them.

Some of the recent legislative measures specific to the girl child are as follows:

a) The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act of 1986 (which makes sexual exploitation of women and girls a cognizable offence)

b) Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961, amended 1986 (which makes dowry - related cruelty to girls and women a cognizable offence)

c) The Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1976 (which raises the girl's minimum age at marriage to 18).

The National Plan of Action for the Girl child 1991 - 2000 integrates several sectors. Its major thrusts include survival, and protection and development of girl children, with gender sensitivity built in at all levels.

The recent establishment (1990) of the National Commission for women is also likely to have positive long term effects on the wellbeing of girl children.

Through the Five Year Plans from 1951 - 1997 we see changes in the major concepts concerning gender. In the First Five Year Plan, the concept of the **welfare** of women dominated. In the next five years, local organization was an emphasis and under the plan, Mahila Mandals were organised at the village level. Even upto 1974, the priority was for **education** of women and for provision of maternal and child health services.

In the Fifth Five Year Plan, there was a conceptual shift from **welfare** to **development,** thus doing away with the benefactor model of government. By the time the Sixth Five Year Plan was launched, the Status of Women Report had been published and one impact was the formal recognition of the area. Hence women's development was included as a separate sector, with emphasis on health, education and employment. The next plan continued the special focus on women, while the Eighth Plan (1992 - 97), currently in operation, calls for a more vigilant monitoring of programmes so that women can function as equal partners in the development process. The conceptual shift now is from **development** to **empowerment** of women.

The setting up of the Department of Women and Child Development under the Ministry of Human Resource Development is symbolic of the revitalisation of the Government machinery. It serves as a nodal department to guide, coordinate and review efforts for the development and implementation of the programmes for women and girl children. The Central Social Welfare Board provides the umbrella for the network of thousands of voluntary organisations working for women and children around the country. The National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development assists the Department in the areas of research and training. At all levels the important role of voluntary organizations in the cause of girl children has been acknowledged by the Government.

There are several schemes and programmes with the objective of making women self - reliant. Most of these interventions also have an effect on the life of the Girl Child. A few selected schemes are mentioned below:

Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) This offers training and financial assistance to women in rural areas, as well as child care and education.

Support to Training and Employment Projects (STEP) is aimed at upgrading the skills of assetless women and providing them with employment in traditional sectors. (This is for adult women, but as is known when women have regular employment, child labour will be rendered unnecessary for the survival of the family).

Training - cum - Employment Scheme in non - traditional trades like Electronics, Electrical work, Manufacture, Fashion Technology, Office Management etc. includes adolescent girls in the programme.

Condensed courses of Education and Vocational Training, originally intended for adult women, also includes girls who may have dropped out of school.

The scheme of **Creches for Working/Ailing Mothers' Children** is now almost two decades old. There is provision for play and recreation, health care, nutrition and immunization of children from birth to five years of age. (These services help working mothers as well as school going girl children enabling them to leave the young child in safe hands).

Integrated Child Development Services Scheme (ICDS) Comprehensive, holistic and covering over 16 million children, from birth to 5 years of age, it serves deprived and under-served communities in villages, tribal areas and urban slums, providing preschool education, immunization health care, nutritional supplement, referrals and parent education. The largest and most comprehensive programme of its kind, its problem continues to be getting quality care to the under-privileged.

Scheme for Adolescent Girls: This uses the ICDS infrastructure and focuses on girls of 11 - 18 years who have dropped out of school. They are educated, trained and equipped to be social animators in their own neighbourhood, with communication, literacy and numeracy skills.

Early Childhood Education (ECE) Located in educationally backward states, children's centres designed to improve children's communication and cognitive skills are running under this scheme. They influence the continuation of girl children in primary school, stemming the dropout rate.

Programmes for women like **Rashtriya Mahila Kosh** (a national credit fund for women) and **Mahila Samriddhi Yojana** (a scheme to promote savings among poor women) as well as the scheme reserving **30% seats in Panchayats** for women are all bound to have an indirect favourable impact on the girl child.

The mothers with better access to capital, equipment and other resources as well as those with a stronger voice in self-government are definitely likely to be warriors on behalf of their girl children.

PART III - DIRECTIONS FOR ACTION

Advocacy and Social Mobilization

Given the findings and taking existing policy into account, a full throated advocacy is essential. Changing social attitudes and initiating a process of social mobilization becomes imperative. The media can be used effectively for this purpose. Radio, television and the printed word are all potent carriers of the messages of gender equality and the value of the girl child. The mass media, however, do not reach all sections of the population. Therefore in addition to media representation, more traditional forms of communication should be used. Street plays, for example, are extremely popular, and prove to be a simple way of gaining people's support. Such methods which are the very life blood of voluntary organizations, will facilitate the outreach to the poor and the non-literate.

Special efforts must be made to develop a positive image of the girl child. Policy makers, planners and administrators must be sensitized to gender issues. These should then be incorporated into policy and implemented unerringly. Issues concerning the girl child should also be included in all public information efforts. Non-government agencies can and do contribute to awareness generation in a large way.

The needs and problems of adolescent girls constitute a category large enough to warrant special attention. Although the legal age of marriage for girls is 18, many girls (mostly in rural areas) are married before they reach this age. They often have children before they are physically mature, leading to high rates of maternal as well as infant mortality. Child development programmes should have a section specifically geared to the needs of adolescent girls. Girls in this age-group should also be provided a variety of opportunities for non-formal education and vocational training and for upgradation of skills.

Central and State Governments need to protect the interests of the girl child by formulating both policies and the mechanisms for their implementation. Constitutional mandates can be reinforced through strengthening the legal system and by speeding up its processes.

It is not enough, however, that the government intervenes merely by enacting new laws. There should be action for enforcing the existing legal provisions and for working at the prevention of legal violations. While governmental or voluntary agencies can work on specific aspects of social mobilisation, most important is that the family and community should be convinced of the need to allow the girl child to evolve to her full potential. The process of social mobilization set in motion must make the girl child everyone's concern. The girl must be empowered to enter the mainstream of social and economic activity, and encouraged to believe in herself as a valuable and contributing member of society.

Health

References to the inadequacy of health facilities and their access have been made throughout the study. In the majority of rural areas there was no functional Primary Health Centre. If families who can afford it, prefer to go to private practitioners or take their children to the distant hospital, it is because local health centre or dispensary services are not available. Imperative, therefore, is the proper functioning of the PHC and the regular visits of doctors and auxiliary nurse midwives. These must be monitored by representatives of the community. As it stands, the health infrastructure is entirely unsatisfactory.

The response of the rural families to the Health Camps undertaken by the research teams is a clear indicator of the scarcity of well-informed face-to-face medical help being available in that area. It is hoped that the recent Panchayat elections around the country will put more power in the hands of the people and that their elected members will be made responsible to monitor the functioning of the health services. The women members of the Panchayat must take up, among other tasks, that of monitoring the delivery of health services.

Among other specific suggestions is the full coverage of all the children in any village or slum for immunization. In our study, even the most advanced or developed village could not report a 100% immunization cover to the children. The schedule of required immunization is complicated and the ordinary unschooled mother is not going to be able to remember it. Calendars, posters, T. V. spots and the like should carry the information about the immunization schedule so that it is "over-learnt" and becomes part of the everyday vocabulary.

Raising the awareness for the need of immunization without providing the proper infrastructure may lead to frustration on a large scale. For instance, the cold chain must be maintained if the polio prevention shots are to be effective. There must be a doctor, nurse or para-professional to follow up the cases, as a single complication that is unattended results in loss of confidence that will take years to rebuild. Thus we see that if any scheme or programme is to be effective, it must have the combination of infrastructural facility and the right (educated) attitudes.

Most of the girl children in our sample had no exposure to the facts of life, for example, the relationship between menstruation and pregnancy was not explained to them. There was hardly any well - informed friendly person in the neighbourhood who could be a support to the growing girl child. Many mothers felt that there was no need to prepare the girl child for the experience of menarche. When menarche came, the girl child would be given hints on practical management of her menstrual periods. Generally there was no attempt to link up the event with the girl child's reproductive system or to give her any sex education at that point.

A review of the school books in the primary school reveals that they vary a great deal in different regions and states, but they have one thing in common. None of them includes the child's perspective : the curriculum tends to be adult - centred and the approach, one of talking down to children. In this context, we find the formal curriculum inadequate in providing the right kind of information or attitudes to the adolescent.

Educating girl children about their own physiology and anatomy is a priority item on the health agenda. Once the concept of menstruation being Nature's way of assuring continuity of the species is explained, the relationship between menstruation and pregnancy follows. The scientific explanation of how the sex of the infant is determined by the contribution of the father's genes needs to be linked up here. Although this is an abstract concept and likely to be uncomprehended in the beginning, its repeated telling becomes important in the face of the "blame" placed on women for producing daughters. Tracing the origin of the newborn's sex to the father will serve for sex education as well as for a scientific understanding of how the sex of the unborn child is determined.

In the process, the unique and indispensible function of the female in reproduction and nurturance of the next generation — and therefore of the continuity of the human species itself should be made clear. Instead of being told only about the unwisdom of having too many children and other such cliches of family planning propaganda, the girl child should be given all the information she needs for choice in and control over her own life.

Education

We have observed that girl children are sent to school for shorter periods or not sent at all — and the reasons for such parental behaviour tend to be complex. Parents weigh the benefits of schooling against the expense of schooling, the need for the girl's labour for household tasks and child care, as well as the anticipated occupational openings for them. The direct costs, the hidden costs and the opportunity costs of a girl's education are calculated and when parents feel that these add up substantially, overwhelming the positive values for schooling, they do not send their daughters to school. Convincing parents of the value of primary education will require education to be valued by everyone including the teachers and educational administrators.

Not only do we need to locate schools closer to communities and to increase the number of schools, especially single - sex schools where required, we need to provide the school with the basic amenities of drinking water and separate toilets for girls.

One of the most dismal findings of the study concerns the quality of the Library and the Laboratory in the schools available to the girl children. Upgrading these facilities should be the priority of the Primary School systems around the country. We hear frequent references to the "scientific temper" but not even the most elementary equipment is available to the ordinary school child — let alone the opportunity to explore and experiment. Laboratories must be provided in every Primary School. The same recommendation goes for the Library. A small well selected Library must be set up in every school and the children must have easy access. Expecting children to be more than merely literate is unrealistic in the presently functioning parched deserts that pass for schools. Children need to be able to handle books before they can become well - informed.

Even though there is no clearly established causal relationship between the number of female teachers in school and the enrolment of girl children, there is a positive correlation. The problem in India, especially in some regions, is the unavailability of female teachers. They often find it difficult to be mobile and to commute from long distances. Offering housing or transport assistance would help a little, but urban teachers are generally unwilling to settle in rural areas. If the school system is willing to settle for a lower educational qualification for the teacher and provide in-service training as in the Shiksha Karmi Programme in Rajasthan, for example, it would be a feasible strategy. Whatever is done will have to be worked out in the context of local conditions. For instance, any rural area will have some resource people whose contributions to the school system can be used and acknowledged. In every instance more locally available persons can be indentified, trained, employed, retrained and sustained, with the active involvement of voluntary organizations in that area.

Even parents without a formal education are capable of a cost - benefit analysis of educating girl children. It is a fact that the benefits are frequently invisible and set in the future, structured on a number of hypotheses, while the costs are immediate, real and tangible. Advocacy should take these factors into consideration; concurrently there must be the kind of social action by which the harvest of benefits can be reaped. In other words, persuading girls to attend school is desirable; but for the benefits of education to accrue, schools should be improved and the labour market opened up to provide employment to the educated.

Energising the Community and Empowering Women

We should be able to see that the infrastructure exists for every woman and girl child to save money and to have it in safe custody. Towards this end, a women's bank should be organised (in the model of SEWA Rural Bank for instance). All of these suggestions will become effective when a Mahila Mandal (local Women's group) starts functioning in every village.

Every effort must be made to help women in slum, village or hamlet to have their own organization. Again in this matter, the work of NGO's is central. A Mahila Mandal should not be an implant, but be organic to the community with its roots in the local reality, growing gradually and becoming the banyan tree providing the common meeting place and shelter that women and girl children need.

Since the setting up of this study about four years ago, some significant achievements have been made in the identification of culturally relevant and gender-oriented programmes. The advocacy of voluntary organizations and the women's collectives has resulted in the beginnings of a change in the attitudes of administrators and planners. However there is bound to be a time lag between the launching of a new idea and its full implementation. Advocacy should be aimed at reducing this time lag, by organizations serving a monitoring function.

This study has revealed that the involvement of women students of College and University in the problems of families living in poverty can be mutually enriching. Supported by the recent observations made of the Total Literacy Movement is a fact that cannot be overlooked: when more privileged members of the society play an active role in a development task, handling it with enthusiasm, energy and empathy, the chemistry of success is created. We need a sense of neighbourhood and a fellow feeling;

we must base in that our conviction that sisterhood is strong; and with that we must put our weight on the side of the girl child. The girl is in a category without a spokesman in society and we must raise our voices on her behalf.

To summarise, the study confirmed many of the hunches and hypotheses with which it was begun i.e. that the birth of the girl child tends to be greeted with anaemic joy, if not grief, and that she continues to be treated within the family and outside as a second class citizen. The devaluation of the girl child has been deeply internalised at several levels of socio-economic status. Parental education and improvement of employment and income are naturally related to the girl's life chances. The clustering of the variables of disadvantage resulting in the downward spiral of poverty pushes the girl child to the nadir of subservience.

The self-image and self-esteem of the girl child must be enhanced and strengthened by activities and exercises with her as well as by changing the perspectives of the persons in her immediate environment. This may be achieved by a variety of methods, including intervention through the school's extra-curricular activities, theatre and puppet formats, displays and discussions.

The area profiles reveal drab and dusty neighbourhoods, frequently characterised by the phrase "nothing ever happens here". A Community Centre is essential - and for some hours of the day, it should be reserved for all the girl children in the community. Here non-formal education on health, the functioning of the woman's body and counselling for problems should be made available.

The chance for the girl child to pick up a skill that can be used for economic betterment has to be provided in the village or urban neighbourhood. The girl children wish that they could use their education to support themselves and supplement family income.

Economic activity is necessary for the girls to feel independent and capable of earning for their own needs. Focus on the employment of girls and women will have to become a priority with local planning.

It is not only changing attitudes and values that is necessary. A number of structural changes must be implemented, in order to free the girl from her present chain of household tasks.

- Poverty alleviation programmes, a more equitable public distribution system and minimum wages to adults will make it unnecessary to employ child labour.

- Creche and other child care facilities must be set up in school, factory and plantation, in order to enable the girl child to attend to her own needs.

- Attention must be paid to provision of clean drinking water within easy reach of households and revival of traditional water conservation methods and rain harvesting by the community.

- Re-introducing the concept of the commons in the village to which all have access, and afforestation activities monitored by the community would be eco-friendly and reduce the drudgery of the girl child.

- Energising existing systems - the Primary and Secondary schools as well as the Primary Health Centre to function effectively and to be accountable to the people.

In all these, a working partnership is necessary between the Government, Voluntary Organizations and the Community.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Courtesy UNICEF — S3, S5, S6, S7, S8, E10, E11, E12, E13, E15, CL18, CS19.

Courtesy S. Anandalakshmy — Cover Page, S2, S4, S9, E14, H16, CL17, CS20, AP21, AP22.

GRAPHICS

Courtesy S. Balasubrahmanyam

SUMMARY REPORT

THE GIRL CHILD AND THE FAMILY

An Action Research Study

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Compiled and Edited by

S. ANANDALAKSHMY

Sponsored by the Dept. of Women and Child Development, HRD Ministry, Govt. of India, New Delhi.

1994

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The energy and strength of the collective activity of women engaged in Women's Studies has characterised this project from its inception to its conclusion. This acknowledgement is really an Editor's note to record, with humility and gratitude, the various contributions of the several women scholars, activists, teachers, administrators and research workers who have made this effort possible.

The Indian Association for Women's Studies had at its Biennial Conference in Waltair passed a resolution to take up a country-wide collaborative study on identified relevant issues. Madhuri Shah, Chairperson, University Grants Commission who had the vision and the will to put Women's Studies on the academic map of India, sensed the importance of such a decision. The SNDT Women's University unit on Research in Women's Studies established by her was the premier institution of its type. It was ideally suited for the brainstorming session that was organised there as a sequel to the Biennial Conference of the Indian Association for Women's Studies. The decision to undertake research studies that would be jointly done by several individuals, backed by their academic institutions had been taken and this was now planned out as a project.

The South Asian region, with the countries having cultural and historical commonalities recognised the need for a congenial environment for the growth and development of children. The second SAARC summit held at Bangalore in 1986 stressed the important of enhancing public consciousness on the rights of children and the need for member nations to adopt the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. It was at the SAARC Summit of 1988 that the issue of children, particularly girl children, was highlighted. The girl child in South Asia was considered symbolic of the neglected aspects in our policies. With this as background, it was proposed that 1990 be declared as the year of the Girl Child in the SAARC region.

The possibility of linking different regions of the country through using the network of the newly set up Women's Studies Units in the Universities, under the aegis of the University Grants Commission is an inspiration to be credited to Vina Mazumdar. Vina Mazumdar, the architect and the moving force behind "Towards Equality" the report on the Status of Women in India, in the mid-seventies, had the insight and imagination to arrange a meeting point between institutions committed to the same cause: Directors of Women's Studies Centres set up at different Universities and the Government of India's Dept. of Women and Child Development who had declared 1990 as the Year of the Girl Child.

This linking up of different institutions across the wide span of the country enabled the study to be as representative as possible.

Maithreyi Krishnaraj, Director, Research Centre from Women's Studies (SNDT) conducted the initial sessions. Two meetings were held, one in Sept. 1989 and the other in Dec. 1989, with some Directors of the Women's Studies Centres and invited experts. Following this, the first planning workshop for the study was organised at University of Kerala by Vasantha Ramkumar. At this meeting the thrust areas for a study of the Girl Child were agreed upon. All the deliberations were conducted democratically with every participant having a voice in the design of the study.

Uma Pillai, Joint Secretary, Dept. of Women and Child Development joined in the informal consultative meetings held in Delhi in the next two months. She was fully supported by Secretary Shukla, who gave the go-ahead to the project. An important decision made at that time was to have activity and intervention built into the research design itself. It was not merely a study of the status quo, but one which would identify programmes for the girl child as entry points and devise interventions which would begin to ameliorate conditions even while they were in the process of being surveyed. The terming of the project as "action research" met with the enthusiastic approval of Meera Seth, Secretary, Dept. of Women and Child Development who had just taken over as Secretary. She put the weight of her authority behind the study on the Girl Child and the Family.

The other details of how we proceeded are included in the opening pages of the first chapter. There were many persons who participated in the design and execution of the study: those who served as Project Directors, Advisors, Officers of the Dept. of Women and Child Development, Ministry of HRD and members of the Coordination Committee.

Particular mention must be made of Susheela Kaushik of Delhi University, who brought her relentless drive and energy to the project, N.K. Nijhawan of the ICSSR who gave of his best, in terms of time and ideas, in hundreds of details, because he was convinced of the importance of such a study, and T.K. Sarojini, Joint Director in the Dept. of Women and Child Development who was the nodal person in the Ministry and let her office serve as a clearing house for information on the project.

There are many institutions that have given their strength and support to this study. Among them are the Indian Council for Social Science Research, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Lady Irwin College, University of Delhi, National Institute for Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD) and all the other Universities involved in this study. Their institutional support is gratefully acknowledged.

Also on record is my thanks to all the person hosting the planning sessions, the training Workshops and the Coding Workshops, among whom are Maithreyi Krishnaraj, Vasantha Ramkumar, Susheela Kaushik, M.M.A. Faridi, Ujwala Patil Hiremath, Rameshwari Varma and N.K. Nijhawan. Gratitude to the Project Directors, Research Associates and Investigators of all the 22 team is hereby recorded.

A large number of persons, including those appointed to help with maintaining the Convenor's office and with data analysis and documentation must be acknowledged. Apart from those on the Coordination Committee and the Advisory Panel, whose names are mentioned separately, I would like to thank the following: Deepa Das for her enthusiastic participation at the early stages of developing the questionnaire; Anil Kumar of the ICSSR, Data Archives, who was a pillar of support in the management of data; Alpana Sharma and Rekha Nautiyal who joined him later to assist with data coding; Devika Rani and later Malathi Venkataraman who helped in the early months with maintenance of files and accounts of the Convenor's office at Madras and particularly N. Lakshmi, whose consistent motivation and efficiency has helped to sustain the project office for over two years.

I am grateful also to Indira Seetharam who worked systematically at decoding the data and setting up the tables. I would like to record the help of Usha Suresh and Sujatha Rani in extracting the relevant data from the field reports. In the final phase, I was ably assisted by Malini Sood. Yeshwanti Balagopal, with competence, confidence and meticulousness also helped in the last phase, bringing the report to its final form.

Most of all, thanks to the girl child who spoke frankly about herself, trusting us to take action, so that she could be enabled to function in the future as a first class citizen in an egalitarian society.

- *S. Anandalakshmy*

Preface

It is with some satisfaction that I introduce this report of the nation-wide study on the **Girl Child and the Family** to policy makers, activists and academics. The study is an excellent example of cooperative endeavour, among the Dept. of Women and Child Development, Women's Studies Centres in the institutions of higher learning and the Indian Council of Social Science Research.

We are now well into the SAARC Decade of the Girl Child (1991-2000). The findings of this study will serve as a reminder of our unfinished tasks and as a source of ideas for programmes to be undertaken in the immediate future.

It was ambitious to undertake such a massive study, with 22 University Centres for Women's Studies collaborating . There were logistic problems and hurdles to smoothly coordinated work, in all its detail. The Centres where the research was conducted were far flung. Each University had its own rules, including a great deal of red tape in some cases. Nevertheless, the tenacity and motivation of the research teams helped to see it through, if only with some understandable delay.

Each research team sought to bring in local colour and idiom, making the report a tangible one, about real people, not just a collection of quantitative data.

For all the participants, the motivating force was their anger at the deprivation of rights and privileges suffered by the girl child and their conviction that the truth must be told now, loud and clear. This bold and committed approach has made the study reveal the many deplorable facets of the life of the girl child in India.

I trust that activists and scholars in the field will treat this study as the first step in a series of action plans to be undertaken for the girl child. It is hoped that the feedback from this study for national policy will also be treated with the seriousness it deserves. And most of all, it is expected that the girl child's future will be brighter and her life chances more equitable than in the past.

Convenor
Coordination Committee

SUMMARY REPORT

GIRL CHILD AND THE FAMILY

Contents

- Rationale, Methodology and Conceptual Framework
- Profile of Households
- Socialization
- Education
- Health
- Menstruation
- Child Labour
- Case Studies
- Area Profiles
- Intervention Programmes
- Conclusion and Implications for Policy

RATIONALE, METHODOLOGY AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Preamble

Gender equality is still a distant dream. Despite the specific schemes and programmes of the Govt., despite the enthusiasm and activities of voluntary agencies, the benefits of development have not yet reached women and girl children.

The young girl is most vulnerable to the insults of poverty and deprivation. As an infant, she is likely to be breastfed for a shorter time than her brother, and be neglected when she falls ill. As she grows up, she becomes the victim of discrimination in access to education, skill development and recreation. Her entire socialization tends to make marriage the ultimate goal of her existence, and subservience to the males in the household, her initial and final destiny.

The Network Develops

Given the shared culture of the South Asian region, the SAARC decided upon 1990 as the year of the Girl Child. Subsequently this has become the Decade of the Girl Child. The heightened awareness of policy makers to their responsibility towards the Girl Child resulted in a few policy changes.

But the need for empirical evidence to substantiate the theoretical perspectives was being felt strongly.

Initial Stages

The concept of a collaborative, country-wide study was first mooted in a workshop at the SNDT University in 1989. In March 1990, the first planning workshop for the study was organised at Kerala University. Directors of the Women's Studies Centres and other scholars in the area discussed and agreed upon the thrust areas for study. Several formal and informal consultative meetings were held in Delhi in the next two months, as a result of which action and intervention in the problem areas related to the Girl Child, were decided upon as an integral part of the study. Twenty - two University Centres volunteered from among those who attended the workshop and shared the research interests. The States in which they are situated and the number of Centres in each state are as follows, alphabetically: Andhra Pradesh (4) Bihar (1) Delhi (1) Gujarat (2) Karnataka (3) Kerala (1) Madhya Pradesh (1) Maharashtra (3) Orissa (1) Punjab (Chandigarh) (1) Rajasthan (1) Tamil Nadu (1) Uttar Pradesh (1) West Bengal (1).

Objectives of the study

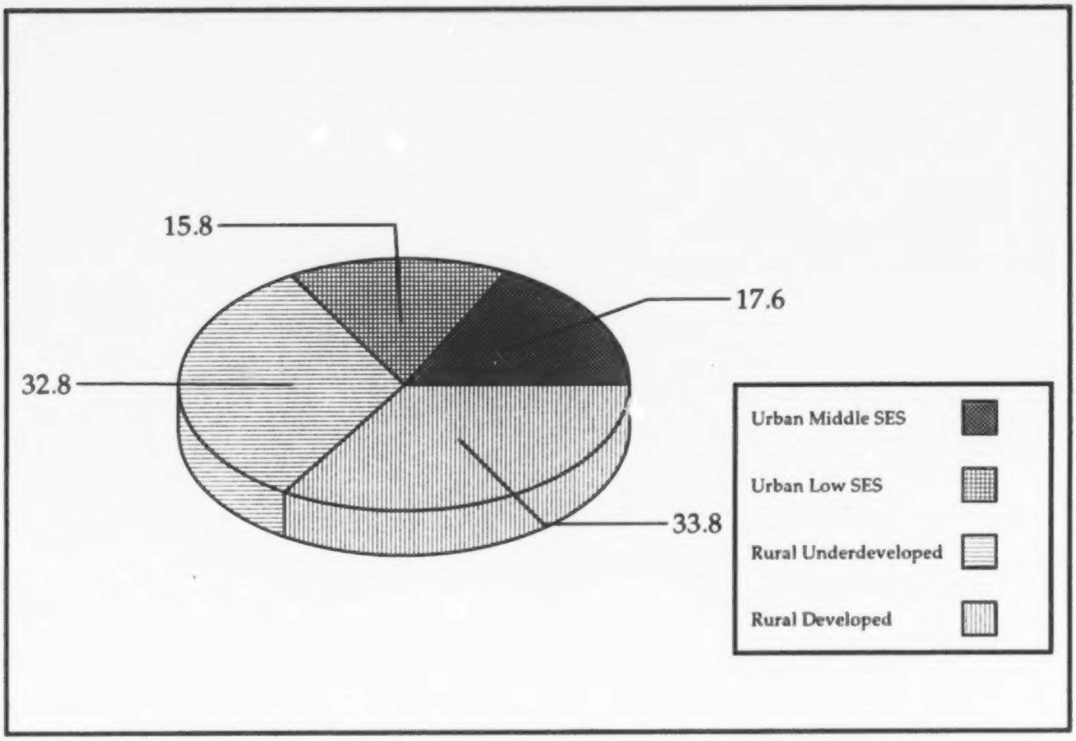
- To generate data of comparable nature on some common parameters that will give an understanding of the situation of the girl child.
- To identify the major problems relating to the status of the girl child and suggest alternate courses of action.
- To start a series of programmes to help to remedy the shortcomings.
- To assist the community and women in particular to pursue desirable alternatives by organising themselves.
- To test the feminist methodology of participant Action Research in an empirical study.
- To assess the status of girl children within the family in order to predict the likely position of women in the 21st Century.
- To provide ways and means of ameliorating the conditions pertaining to the low status and subordination of girls in order to provide equality and justice as enshrined in the Constitution.

It was decided that each centre would provide the texture of that region by examining folk songs and folk stories, proverbs and local beliefs, as well as undertake a small survey of contemporary popular literature in that language and region. This was planned so that the individual characteristics of each sub-culture would be included in the national study.

Towards this goal, a Coordinating Committee comprising individuals with experience and expertise in women's studies was formed. Some members of the Coordinating Committee felt that the study could be undertaken at the Women's Studies Centres set up under the UGC Scheme and were quick to suggest the linking of the Dept. of Women and Child Development's plan of research on the Girl Child with the University system. There was a heartening dialogue among the partners in this project before it was launched.

Training Workshops

In the month of June 1990, two workshops of 4-day duration, were held in SNDT University, Bombay and Delhi University. This was to train the research teams in the methods of sampling, interviewing and collection of data. Experts in these areas provided the collaborating teams with explanations and demonstrations. The design of the study which had been evolved through the participatory exercise was finalised at these workshops.



Proportion of Types of Area in The Sample

Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

Experts in Statistics and Research Methods from the Indian Council for Social Science Research and Tata Institute of Social Sciences shared their expertise in this matter. The sample was planned as follows: Each team was to take two urban wards and four villages. The level of economic development and female literacy would be the basis for differentiating the districts in the rural sample. In the urban case, one sample was to be from the poorest community and the other from a middle SES level, in the city. In each sample 100 girls between the ages of 7 to 18 were to be selected for the study. The households from which they were taken were to be studied by a fairly detailed schedule. In addition, the mother or mother-surrogate of each girl was also to be interviewed. Thus, each research team filled up 600 schedules on the Girl Child, an equal number on their mothers and on the household and thus a total of 1800 questionnaires came from each of the collaborating centres. For the national study, there were 13200 girls, and their mothers, and information on as many households. This information runs into 300 items on the girl child, 240 items on the mother and 106 items on the household.

Methods of Research

Following the training workshops and the collective thinking on appropriate methodology, a manual on methodology was published by the Research Centre for Women's Studies, SNDT Women's University. It was also decided that the entry point of the research teams into the villages could be in the form of an orientation to health (camps for immunisation, family planning, health check up) or literacy (numeracy, literacy, legal literacy, skill development).

It was further decided that the girl and her mother would be interviewed separately. The objective fact of the girl's subordination in the family and the subjective experience of her powerlessness were both to be studied. Raising the level of awareness of girls and women about the existing governmental schemes and programmes for the amelioration of their problems was one major objective. Empowering the girl to have some control over her own choices, especially those concerning her education and self-expression was another important objective.

The questionnaires (Household Schedule, Girl Child Schedule and Mother Schedule) were finalised by a centrally constituted team of experts, and were sent to all the participating centres for translation and use. The Indian Association for Women's Studies met for the biennial Conference at Jadavpur University in Feb. 1991, and many of the Project Directors and Research Staff attended it. Full use was made of their presence at the Conference. Another workshop on methodology was organised in Calcutta. The few Project Directors who could not attend (from 4 centres) were informed of all procedures through detailed correspondence.

Coding

A number of questions in these schedules were open-ended. It is to take note of the open-ended questions and varied responses to them that a Coding System has been devised. The actual coding system was developed only when some data had been collected. The responses from a section of the sample were taken as true indicators of the responses of the entire sample. For some kinds of questions (castes, languages, districts) the coding system has a code for each name mentioned. For most of the other questions, the thrust of the exercise was to develop a classification system for the responses to each question.

Two Coding Training Workshops were held - one in Mysore in April '91 and the other in Gulbarga in May '91. Half of the total number of project staff attended each of the Workshops. For the three teams who were not able to attend either Workshop, a third one was organised in New Delhi in July '91. Thus all twenty two research teams participated in the Coding Workshops and were equipped to prepare the data for computer analysis.

The Coordinating Committee had the task of monitoring the study at all the centres, visiting any centre which had a problem, and generally keeping the communication system active. The Coordinating Committee also met several times to develop plans for Data Analysis and to monitor the progress of the collaborating teams.

Data Management

The management of data in this project is the major responsibility of the Indian Council for Social Science Research. From the early phase of development of questionnaires and deciding upon the sampling frame, to the stage of data analysis (with the development of codes and code books, data entry, data cleaning and consistency checks at intermediate stages) we have had the advice and guidance of the ICSSR.

Substantive Issues

Apart from a detailed Household Schedule, which solicits a vast quantum of information on all kinds of relevant variables, the questionnaire intended for the Girl Child seeks information on major aspects of her existence - schooling, level attended, reasons for discontinuation, facilities at the school and those availed by her, her health, history of illness, kind of treatment and medical attention, reasons for the same, immunisations, food patterns and special diet, whether food taken to school and so on; myriad facts on socialization which can be carefully constructed as a map of life experience. And on every aspect, whether there was discrimination on the basis of gender was an inevitable query. The work and labour status of the girl, along with conditions of work and wages, and the economic contribution made by her is a constituent part of the study. We thus expect to have a clear picture of a day in the life of the Girl Child, virtually mini-ethnographies of over two dozen sub-cultures.

Not only are the facts noted, but the reasons behind every practice including menarche rituals and menstruation taboos, are elicited. And what is more, the proximal setting of the particular household, as well as the eco-niche in which the household is situated, provide the space against which the life of the girl can be studied and assessed. The open-ended questions have been anchored by an exhausting coding system, so that no information gathered is lost. In fact, the coverage of detail is rather ambitious and there will be a great deal of secondary data for other researchers in gender issues in future years.

This project is unique in the following features :

1. It is a collaborative endeavour between the Dept. of Women & Child Development, Govt. of India and the higher educational system.

2. It utilises the UGC infrastructure of Women's Studies Centres to assemble a team of collaborating researchers around the country. Thus a large study has been completed cost-effectively.

3. It is more than a status report on the Girl Child. Action and Intervention programmes tuned to the needs of each situation are included.

4. Using research methods and instruments developed by the entire team of participating academics, this study combines the advantages of micro-research and macro-research - i.e. for each team, the study is detailed, but when summed up over 22 teams, there is a large sample.

5. It demonstrates the catalytic role of the educational institutions in community work, particularly in the issues regarding Girl Children. There is a vast potential for utilising the institutional framework of the Universities for outreach.

These five aspects make the project an exceptional instance of cooperation in research and the genesis of national policy in the cause of the Girl Child.

PROFILE OF THE HOUSEHOLD

As per the research design, based on the demographic patterns of India, the majority of the sample surveyed was rural. About a third was urban. Several religious denominations were included. Hindus comprised 85% of respondents, Muslims 7% and Christians 2 . 5%. Sikhs, Buddhists and Jains, among others, were also part of the sample. Approximately 20% were from the Scheduled Castes (SC) and 5 . 4% from the Scheduled Tribes (ST).

Several linguistic areas around the country were represented, but due to the study being conducted in available Women's Studies Centres at various Universities, there was some unevenness of representation. A larger proportion of Hindi, Marathi and Telugu speaking girls were included in the sample (see location of collaborating centres). Only 11% of families were found to speak more than one language at home.

Migration

Nearly 80% of the families surveyed were found to be stable in their place of origin. Of the 20% who had migrated to other villages, towns or cities, most had done so more than 20 years earlier.

Occupation

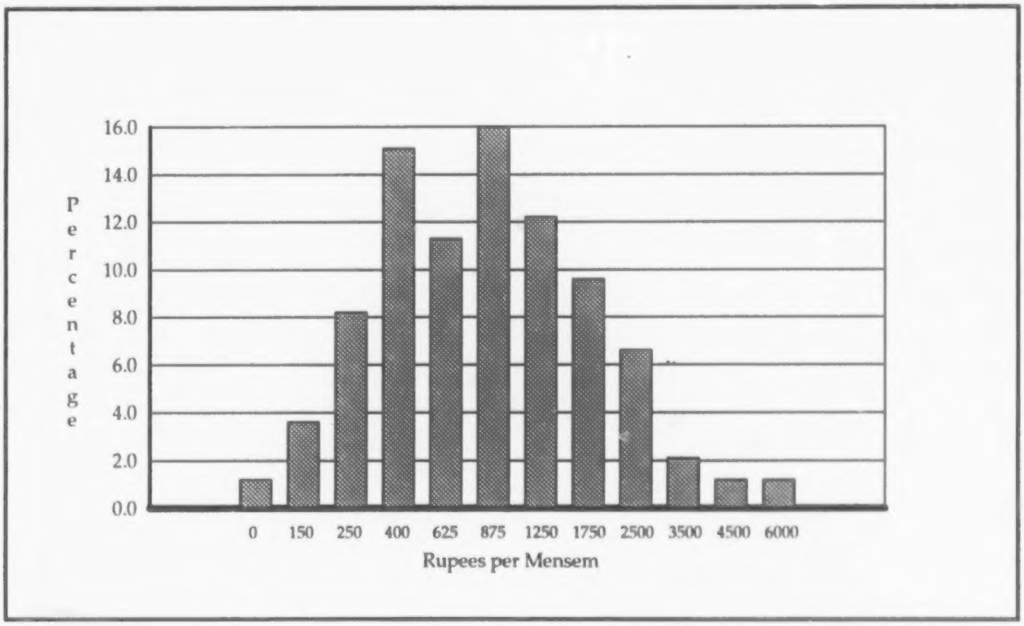
The largest main household occupation in the sample appeared to be agriculture (38%), comprising small land owners (29%) and agricultural labourers (8 . 5%). A fairly large proportion of respondents (31%) claimed that they had no main household occupation, indicating that they were in services, business or professions. Almost 70% of households had no subsidiary occupations.

Economic Status

More than half (55%) of fathers (also heads of households) earn between Rs.300/- p.m. and Rs.1500/- p.m. Most families (72 . 3%) had two adult male earners. Only 4 . 2% had only one adult male member generating income. In the case of females, vastly different data are found. More than a third (39%) of families have only one adult female earner, and 4 . 4% have two female earners. While no families have adult males who are not earning an income outside the house, as many as 55% of families have female members who are not earning. About (12%) of the girls and (9%) of the boys earn an income. More than 70% of the families surveyed have an income between Rs.500/- and Rs.3000/- p.m.

The majority of women (56 . 5%) have no income of their own. Of those who do, most earn Rs.100 to Rs.500/- per month. A similar pattern of low to moderate earnings exists for both girls and boys who work outside the home.

Since assessment of economic status through incomes alone is at best difficult and unreliable, ownership of assets was examined. Only 8% of the sample owned nothing - neither house nor non-agricultural land. All the rest owned their own houses, whether 'kutcha' or 'pucca', small or large. When ownership of agricultural land was surveyed, it was found that 56% owned no agricultural land, and 63% owned no livestock, poultry or fish. Nearly 75% owned no agricultural implements.



Father's Income

A little less than half the heads of the household owned some form of conveyance, the majority (32 . 5%) having cycles or cyclerickshaws and a fairly large number owning motor cycles or mopeds (10 . 4%).

More than 60% of the families owned Radios, TV's or VCR's, but only about 50% owned appliances like fans, sewing machines, refrigerators and blenders, or brass, copper and stainless steel utensils.

More than 64% of the households claimed they had no debts while 21% owed between Rs.1000- and 10,000/-.

Government Programmes

It was found that Government Programmes for those in need did not reach out as far as is often claimed. On the whole 1/3 of all households say that they have had no benefit at all, from any Govt. Programmes. Between 36% and 70% stated that they had received no benefit from programmes aimed at bettering employment, health, children's welfare, education, housing and other welfare programmes.

Only about 21% of respondents found an improvement in income as a result of development schemes. A little over 41% claimed that health had improved and 49% said that education had improved. About 23% felt that development schemes were riddled with problems, ranging from corruption of officials to implementational difficulties.

Housing

Of the families surveyed, 46% lived in 'pucca' houses and 49% in 'kutcha' houses or combinations of 'kutcha' and 'pucca' houses. More than 80% own their homes, however modest. Of the remaining 20%, 10% pay rents of less than Rs.200/- per month, and 4 . 3% (mostly middle class city dwellers) pay over Rs.1000/- per month. Families who live in one or two room houses comprise 60% of the sample, and only 9 . 5% have houses with more than five rooms. The number of rooms in the house seems to be a salient indicator of socio-economic status.

Most households have minimal amenities within the home. Water is a basic necessity; yet 64 . 5% have no source of drinking water within the house. Of this number, less than half have access to a tap outside the home. The rest make use of hand pumps and wells, while there is a very small percentage that relies on ponds or water tankers. Around 2% of families have to go outside the village for water; for most of the others, water is available either just outside the house or within the neighbourhood. In nearly 44% of families, it is the duty of the female members to collect the water for daily use.

Although 94 . 5% of families stated that their village or area had electricity, 29% had no electricity in their homes. The majority (44 . 5%) had between one and five electrical points in the house.

Sanitation was a scarce amenity for most of the sample. A large number of households (54%) had no toilet facilities whatsoever. Of the rest, the largest number (25%) had a flush latrine.

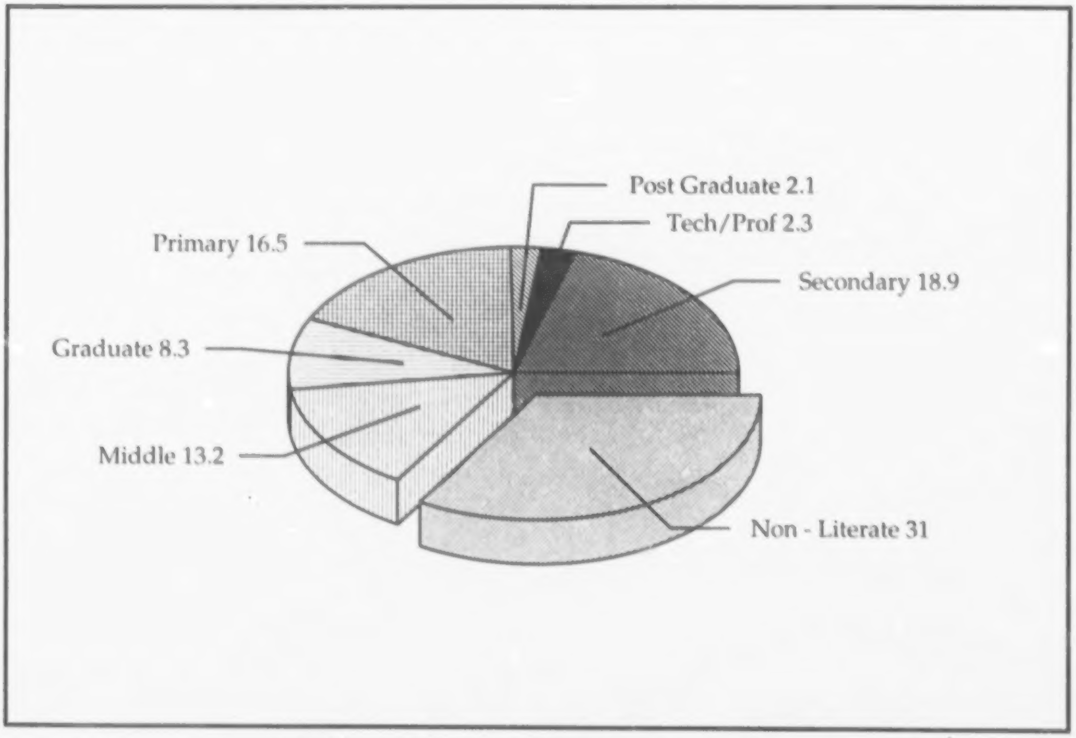
Nearly 78% of households use conventional cooking fuels - wood, dung, coal or kerosene. Only about 17% use gas or electricity or combinations of conventional and non-conventional fuels that save time and energy.

Family Structure

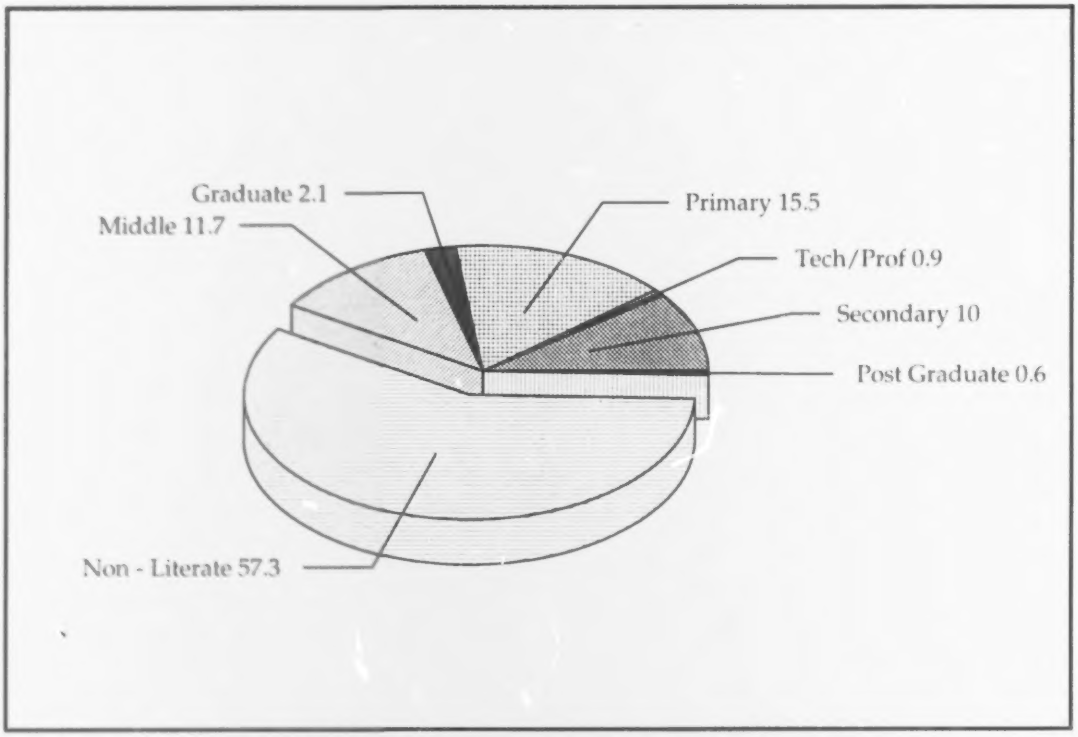
In 84% of families, the father is considered the head of the household. The majority of families (72%) are nuclear in structure. Nearly half (45%) of households had 5 or 6 members. Only 10% have between 9 and 12 members in the family. In 68% of families, the mother is the only adult female in the household. While 43 . 4% of families have only one daughter, only around 21% have only one son. More families have two sons (38 . 5%) than two daughters (32%) and again there are more families with three sons (27 . [illegible]%) than with three daughters (only 15%).

Education

The education of the parents is a good indicator of the socio-economic status of the sample. Almost a third (31%) of fathers and 57% of the mothers are non-literate. However about 49% fathers have been educated to primary, middle or higher secondary level and a further 13% to graduate or post-graduate level and technical or professional diplomas. Only 3 . 6% mothers have anything beyond higher secondary education. These figures for literacy and education levels approximate those for the country in the 1991 census.



Father's Level of Education



Mother's Level of Education

Occupation

Approximately a third (30%) of fathers were involved in agriculture as big/small farmers or agricultural labourers. About 10% were unskilled workers. These are the largest categories. Service/Professional/White-collar jobs together constitute about 20% of the sample and large, medium or petty businesses and piece rate workers make up 13%.

The pattern of education of the eldest male member of the family other than the father was similar to that of the male head of the household. More than half (58%) were educated at least to primary level, and 7% of those to college level. However nearly 54% were unemployed. Of those who worked, the types of occupations they had, as well as the proportions in which these occupations were represented, approximated the figures obtained for the fathers.

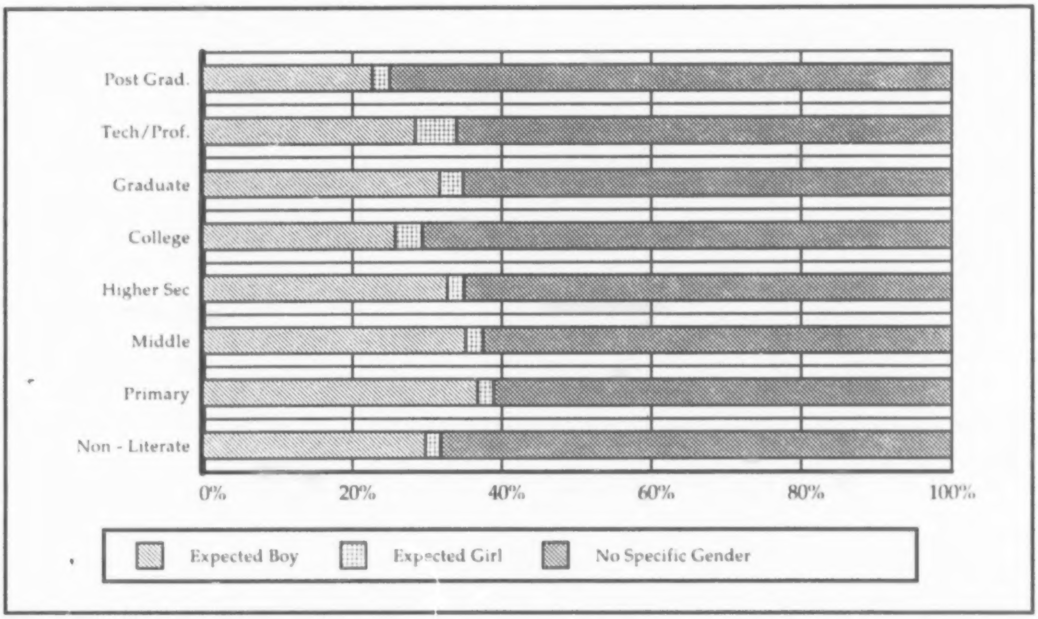
The eldest female in the house other than the mother was most often the sister (40 . 7%). In 37 . 5% of families, there was no other (elder) female. In 30 . 5% of households the eldest female was non-literate.

The informant in most cases (54 . 6%) was the mother of the child, supporting the observation of previous studies, that women are more likely than men to answer a questionnaire administered in the home. The proportion of questionnaires responded to by the fathers was 32%.

SOCIALIZATION

The responses of the girl child revealed the vast gender bias inherent in the several sub-cultures included in the study. There is no ambiguity in the demarcation of gender in the socialization of children; clearly the girl child is the child of a lesser god.

Gender Expectation of the Unborn Child



Gender Expectation of Unborn Child
Related to Father's Level of Education

The term "expected" can be taken to be another expression for "desired". While 64 . 5% of mothers said that they did not expect one sex in preference to the other, as many as 31% said they expected a boy. However, only 2% expected a girl. The father's level of education did not have any effect on gender preference. Economic status also did not seem to have any impact. About a third of the fathers (a range between 25 . 4% and 36 . 0%) across all income categories expected a son, and only about 2% expected a daughter.

Celebrations on the Arrival of a Baby and Reactions to the Birth

Between 8% and 17% of families held a special celebration on the occasion of the birth of a male child. The percentage increases as prosperity (indicated by the number of rooms in the house) increases. Special celebrations for the birth of a girl were reported by 0 . 3% to 2% of families. Approximately a fifth of the sample held no celebration at the birth of an infant.

Preference for a son is clearly related to patriarchy, and it was found that unhappiness over the birth of a daughter was slightly higher in both father and paternal grandparents, as compared to mother and maternal grandparents.

Activities Daughters share with Parents

Very few girls share their play-time with father (0.8%) or mother (4%), the majority (66 . 4%) sharing play with siblings or friends. However 23 . 6% of girls said that they had no time for play activities. Predictably 77 . 5% of girls share household work with the mother only, as compared to 0 . 5% with the father only.

About a third (33 . 8%) of girl children surveyed, eat with their mothers only. However, about 55% of the girls stated that this was an activity shared with both parents. Schoolwork is shared more often with siblings or peers (49%) than with either or both parents (a range of 7 . 6 to 8 . 9%). Skill training is, by and large, the domain of the mother (28%) rather than the father (0 . 4%).

How the Girl spends her free time

About a third (31%) of girls said they spent their free time with friends and 4% said they do nothing in particular. Most of the others considered "free time" to be time available for a task that needs to be completed. When asked about free time 31% said they did household work, 16% that they did homework, and 4% said that they worked in the fields.

The girl child spends most of her time with friends (67%), female members of the family (38%) and female cousins (18%). Only around 1% of her time is spent in the company of male relatives, and even less than that with male friends (0 3%).

The number of rooms in the house was considered to be an indicator of economic status. As economic status improves, the time spent by the girl child both on

housework (a range of 10%) and play (a range of 12%) decreases. However time spent on activities like knitting or stitching (3 . 8% to 10 . 4%), school work (9 . 5% to 26 . 3%) and entertainment (radio or television: 3 . 1% to 6 . 9%) increases.

The proportion of girls reporting that they do not play at all is inversely related to father's level of education (9 . 9% to 31 . 4%). There is a direct relationship between level of father's education and outdoor play of the girl child (a range of 15%).

Punishment and Reward

Girls tend to be punished by being scolded more often than boys (58 . 5% as compared to 50 . 3% for males) and by being scolded and beaten (29 . 3% as compared to 25 . 5% for males). Severe beating appears to be of the same magnitude for both sexes.

Girls are more likely (43%) not to receive any rewards for good behaviour than boys (38%).

Availability of Television/Radio

More than a third of the girl children have regular access to television (36%) or radio (34 . 4%). However about 40% of girls do not have or have never had access to either TV or radio, and upto 45% are only rarely reached by these media.

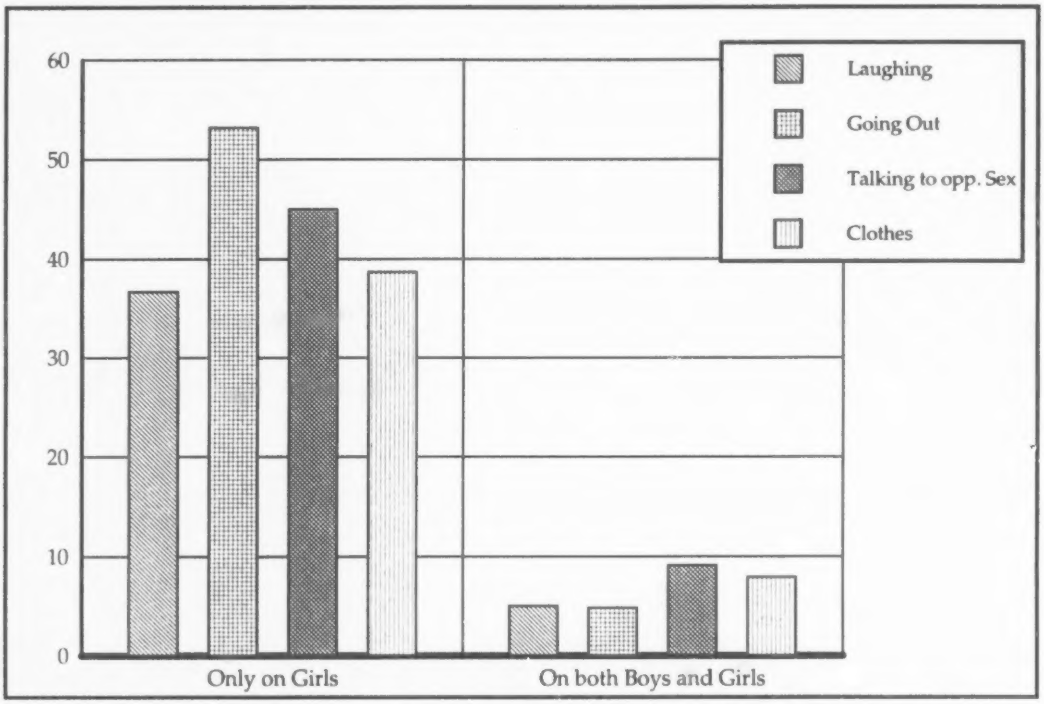
Persons Escorting the Girl Child

More than 75% of the girls have never been out of the village on work, pilgrimages or picnics. For most other activities - marriages, festivals, visits or medical treatment, the girl is most often accompanied by her mother and other female relatives or by both parents together. Girls generally (28%) go with friends to school.

Recreation and Restrictions on the Girl Child

Parents' level of education is seen to have an inverse relationship to the daughter's access to the cinema (taken as symbolic of any visit for pleasure or fun). The less educated the mother, the more likely she is to restrict her daughter's access to films (a range of 34 . 8% to 59 . 8%). The same holds true for the fathers (36 . 4% to 51 . 1%).

As parents' level of education increases, restrictions on girls going out decrease. An interesting finding is that mothers who have reached the secondary level of education are 10% less strict than fathers at each corresponding level of education. Meeting and talking to boys is forbidden to 24% of girls. Again restrictions decrease as parental level of education increases by 18% in the case of fathers and nearly 27% in the case of mothers.



Restrictions on Behaviour related to Gender

Travel is mostly undertaken to visit relatives or to attend weddings. A large majority of the girls have never been on a pilgrimage (77%) or on a picnic or outing (79%).

The girls in the sample report more restrictions on their laughing (36 . 7%), going out (53%) and wearing non-traditional clothes (38 . 7%) than on their brothers.

Admired Qualities

Many girls (22%) stated that to be educationally accomplished is an admirable trait in a "good girl". Yet this figure drops to 2 . 4% with regard to the qualities of a "good wife" and drops out entirely in the qualities of a "good daughter-in-law". For most of the other traits, the differences are not so dramatic.

Modest, helpful and co-operative behaviour is expected more from girls than from boys across all development levels and regions.

Gender Differences

About 77% of girls feel that literacy is important for both boys and girls, and 30% that the family occupation is relevant for boys only. Certain skills eg. cooking (87%) and sewing (48%) are very definitely delineated as female domains, and mastery of them is expected of the girl child.

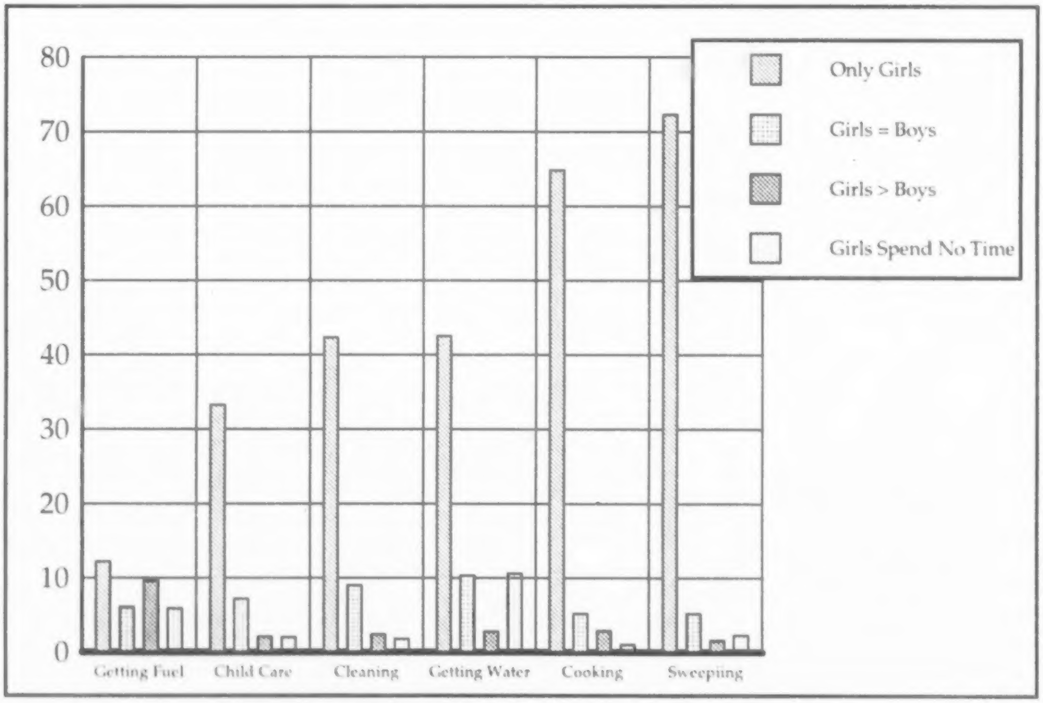
Skills of the Girl Child

More than 60% of the girls say they have no skills, a result of the belief that all the tasks they carry out are unskilled jobs. Of the skills identified, the highest are sewing skills (17%) and cooking skills (8%).

The majority of girls say they learn their skills from their mothers (18 . 5%), while only 6 . 5% say they pick up their skills in school.

Gender Division of Domestic Tasks

Sweeping appears to be the gender stereotypic task that is performed by the largest number of girls (72%), followed by cooking (65%). Fetching water and cleaning the house rank third (both around 42%). When looking at the cases where boys and girls spent equal amounts of time on the same chores, it was seen that only in 1% of the cases did the boys and girls spend equal time on cooking, while 10.6% spent equal time fetching water and 5 . 9% gathering fuel.



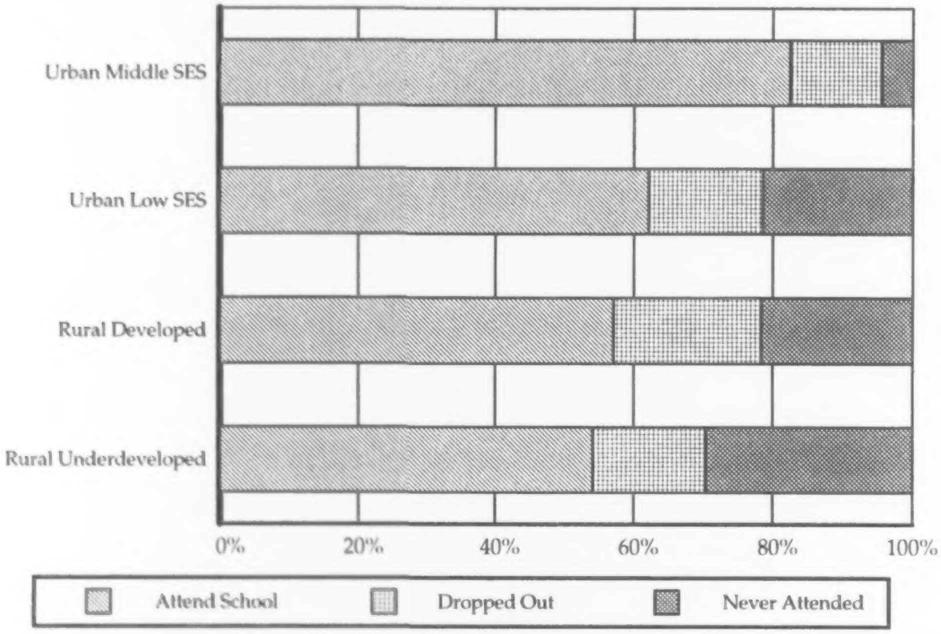
Gender Division of Domestic Tasks

EDUCATION

A sizeable quantum of this entire research endeavour was focussed on the girl child's school attendance and the reasons for her dropping out. The reasons for the girl children never going to school were also investigated. The relationship of school attendance to the demographic variables pertaining to the community and family were also examined. The facilities available and used in the schools, the distance traversed by the girl child to attend school and the amount of time spent in school work were studied. Some idea of the girl's future aspirations was also gleaned.

School Attendance of Girls

The percentage of girls attending school is 61% of the total sample. Those who dropped out comprise a little over 17%, while the figure for those who never attended school stands at 21%.



School Attendance of Girls Related to Type of Area

When the sample is broken up into rural and urban, it is found that the urban sample has 18% more girls in school, while the rural sample has 13% more girls who never attended school. When data is further disaggregated according to the type of district or area, the percentage of girls attending school ranges from a low 54 . 2% in the rural under-developed areas to a high 82 . % among the urban middle SES. Similarly girls who never attended school total 29 . 6% in the rural under-developed areas, and it drops to 4 . 4% in the urban middle SES. Only 55% of girls from low literacy areas are in school, as compared to nearly 68% from high literacy areas

A relationship was found between caste hierarchy and percentage of girls who never attended school. Starting with 4% among Brahmins and 15% among Forward Castes, the percentage of girls never in school increases as we go down the caste hierarchy to 41% among Scheduled Tribes.

As far as religion is concerned, the percentage of girls never in school was found to be much lower for Sikhs (3 . 2%) and Christians (6 . 6%) than for Muslims (28 . 5%) or Hindus (24 . 8%).

The type of school was considered as a possible variable influencing school attendance of the girl child. A marginal difference was found, with 23% dropouts from co-educational schools as compared to only 17% from girls' schools.

For 50 . 6% of the girls, the school was within the village or locality. Of these, 75% attended school while 25% dropped out. Twenty-one percent of girls had a school within 2 kms and of these 81% attended school while 18% dropped out. Similar figures are reported for girls whose school was 2-5 kms away. Less than 20% of the sample of girls stay with relatives or friends or in a hostel so as to facilitate school attendance.

Medium of Instruction in School

More than half (56%) of the sample attended schools in which the medium of instruction is their mother tongue, and for 13% of the girls, the medium of instruction is the regional language (not the mother tongue). Nearly 7% attend schools in which the curriculum is taught in English.

Participation in extra-curricular activities

About half (49 . 2%) of girls said they took part in games. This was the largest category. Only a fifth (22%) of the girls in the sample took part in music and dance, while participation in other activities is negligible.

Facilities available in Schools and Use of these Facilities

While around 90% of the schools had a playground or some playing space, only 42% had a library and 15% a science lab. The proportion of girls whose schools offered scouting was 19%.

The library is used frequently by only 4.4% of the girls, and even less (2.6%) use the science lab frequently. Scouting is least popular, with ony 2.1% of girls participating regularly. Although 90% of girls have playgrounds in their schools, they are used by only 39% of the girls.

Reasons for not Attending School

Mothers of the 21% of girls who never attended schools were asked why they never sent their daughters to school. Economic reasons were quoted by 8.6% of the mothers. A further 4% said that the family did not value education. Around 3% said that girls were required at home to look after younger siblings or to do household work.

Dropouts

Of a total of 2082 girls in the sample who had dropped out, the largest number (45%) had dropped out in the age range 7 to 11 years, i.e., in the first three or four years of schooling. At around 12-13 years, the age of menarche, a further 22% dropped out. The class in which they dropped out provides parallel data.

More than a third (37.4%) of the girls drop out in the first four years of school (Stds. I to IV) and 26.8% do so in the 6th to 8th Standard.

The number of girls attending school decreases as the age level goes up. Of the 14-15 year olds, 18.6% were attending school but only 9% of 16-18 year olds were still in school.

Only 4.5% of the girls (and a corresponding 3.7% of mothers) stated economic reasons for dropping out, and 1.1% said they had to work for wages. About 1.5% of mothers said the girls dropped out because the family did not value education and 3.2% of the girls gave the same reason. Less than 2% (1.8) of the total sample of girls reported they had no school in the locality.

Caste and Socio-cultural Reasons for not Attending School

Only 4.4% of the entire sample stated that the family did not value girls' education and this was why girls did not attend school. An even smaller percentage (1.6%) quoted social disapproval as a reason.

When these figures were broken down according to caste, it was found that, of those stating "The family does not value education", 1.3% were Brahmins, 15.6% were from the Forward Castes, 13.3% from the Scheduled Castes and as many as

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39.7% from the Backward Castes. The perception that "Society" does not approve of girls attending school has a similar pattern : 35.7% of girls giving this reason belonged to the Backward Castes.

Mother's level of Education and Girl's School Attendance

It was found that only 44.4% of the girls whose mothers were not literate attend school. In families where the mothers have studied upto Primary level, 75.5% of daughters attend school and of mothers who have reached Middle school, 86.6% of their daughters are in school.

It was found that 93% of the mothers who have reached the Higher Secondary level of education send their daughters to school and this figure rises to 97% for college educated mothers. There is thus a strong linear relationship between level of mother's education and the girl child's school attendance.

Father's level of Education and Girl's School Attendance

Again, a direct linear relationship is seen between father's level of education and daughter's school attendance. Only 35.2% of girls whose fathers are non-literate are in school; this figure rises to 71.2% for the fathers who have been educated upto Middle school level and is nearly 95% when they have been college-educated.

Father's Occupation and Proportion of Girls in School

The higher the occupational level, the larger the percentage of girls attending school. In families where the father is a senior professional, 95.5% of girls are in school, but only 38.4% of the daughters of agricultural labourers attend school.

A similar relationship was found between household income and the girl's school attendance. Fewer girls (52%) attend school when the income is about Rs.300 - 500/- than when the income is between Rs.1500 - 3000/- (70%) or Rs.3000/- to 5000/- where 85% are in school.

Family structure and school attendance were not found to be related.

Birth Order and School Attendance

A total of 65.4% of the girls in the sample were the first born among living girl children. Of these 63.7% are in school. Twenty percent of the sample were second born girls and 58.6% of them are in school. Of the 8.1% third-borns, 55% attend school.

Household Tasks and School Attendance

Household tasks often interfere with schooling. Of the 8.6 % of girls who have to fetch water for the household, 80% are in school, but out of girls looking after younger children, only 61.4% are in school.

Reasons for liking/disliking School

A fourth of all the girls surveyed stated that schooling improved knowledge and skill, while nearly 17% enjoyed school for the friendship and social interaction it provided. The prospect of employment (8 . 5%) was the third reason mentioned for wishing to remain in school. Only 1 . 2% of the girls claimed to dislike school which they attributed to harsh teachers and strict discipline. Personal factors such as ill health or low self-image were mentioned by 1%.

Help in Studies

In 30% of the total, the girl child studies on her own. In 27% of the cases she is assisted by parents and other relatives, and in 14% of the cases by a tutor. Sometimes (5 . 2%) a neighbour or friend helps with studies.

Future Aspirations and School Attendance

Of the 25% of girls who are undecided as to future aspirations, nearly half (48%) are in school. Of the 15% who want only to be good housewives, 25% attend school. Among those who wish to be teachers or take up other jobs, 86% and 74% respectively are in school.

More than a fourth (28%) of the girls attending school wished to become teachers, and 13% to become doctors.

The majority of mothers (36 . 4%) wish their daughters to become housewives, although half of these send the girls to school. About a fifth (22%) of mothers whose daughters are in school wish their girls to have "any kind of job". About 17% of mothers feel a girl should be married by the age of 15, and half of these have never sent their daughters to school. Only one-third of these mothers have daughters currently in school.

Mother's Attitudes towards Education

Mothers were questioned about what they thought were desirable qualities in girl children. Only about 16% thought education was important. Of these, around 80% ensure that the girl attends school. The majority (82%) of mothers put more

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emphasis on modesty, obedience, industriousness and sharing family responsibility. Only 59% of their daughters are in school.

When the attitude of the mothers to girls moving out of the house for education or employment is that it is for their own growth and development, then around 80% of their daughters are sent to school. Where mothers feel that girls should not go out unless absolutely necessary, only around half send their girls to school.

In 10% of the families, whether or not the girl attends school is solely the mother's decision, and in 33% of the cases it is solely the father's decision. For about 40% of families this is a joint parental decision.

When mothers (7.8%) felt that there was no use educating a daughter, nearly 70% of the girls never attended school. Twenty-nine percent of mothers said that their daughters should study "as far as they want", and 78% of their daughters were in school. For the rest, there is a linear relationship between the level of education aimed for and the proportion of girls in school. Figures increase from 29% to 86% as the aspired education level goes up. At the same time, the number of those who never attended drops from nearly 70% to around 4%.

Around 63.5% of mothers said they spent no time helping with either son's or daughter's homework, while about 11% said they helped both.

Ideal level of Education: the View of the Girl Child

The girls' answers to the question of ideal level of education for both boys and girls show that they make no gender differentiation on the whole. More than a fourth (26.7%) of the girls felt that they should have at least a high school education, and 31.4% said that graduation from College/University with a degree was ideal.

Gender Differences

Seventy one percent of the girls said that both boys and girls should have equal education, and of these 70% of the girls are in school. Of the 7.6% of girls who felt boys should have more education, around 46% are in school.

Advantages of Education

Around 50% of girls felt that education helped in personality development, 20% that it improved employment prospects and 16% that it improved skills.

A small percentage of girls (3.6%) said there was no disadvantage in being illiterate. Of these, only 19% were in school; and 66% had never attended school. More than half the girls (50.6%) felt that illiteracy results in a low self-image, 12.6% that it led to lower social status and 11.7% that it resulted in fewer job opportunities.

HEALTH

The problem of health is a continuing one for the girl child. Girls are seen to have low weight, stunted growth and delayed physical development. Aside from affecting the general health status of the female child this also leads to a high female mortality rate during pregnancy and childbirth and to the newborn child being at risk.

Mother's Health

The health of the mother, as antecedent to the health of the daughter is examined here, under salient heads.

Number of Living Children

It was found out that almost 50% of the mothers have between 3 and 4 children. About 20% have fewer than two children, 14 . 4% have five children and about 13% have six or more children.

Birth Order of the Girl Child among Living Girl Children

Almost 65% of the girls in the sample were first born and 20 . 4% were second born. The percentages of third and fourth borns were about 8% and 3 . 3% respectively.

Mother's Age at First Pregnancy

Nearly a third (35%) of the mothers were pregnant with their first child before reaching adult status (18 years).

Mother's Health Checks during Pregnancy

It was found that a significant portion of the sample (61 . 7%) falls into the `did not respond/N.A'. category. However, about 31% of the expecting mothers did go for a regular check up and about 15% went on an irregular basis.

Anti Tetanus Serum (ATS) taken by Mother

It was seen that almost 55% of the mothers had never taken an ATS while only 34 . 6% had taken all the required doses for all pregnancies.

Immunisation

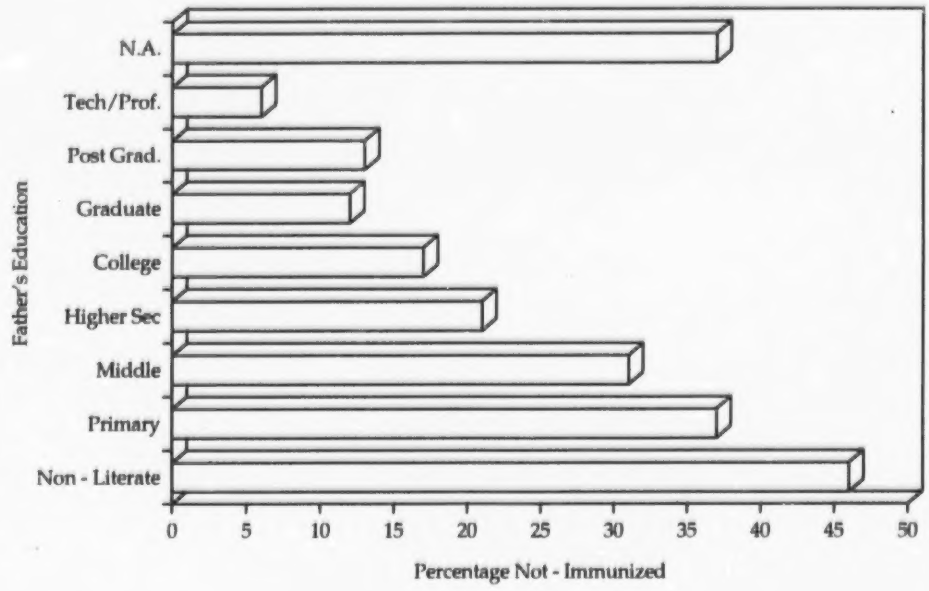
We found that a little over 50% of the children had been immunized for BCG and Polio and 43% had been immunized for Measles. The number of children who had not been given any kind of immunization was a little over 30% for BCG and DPT/Polio and 39% for Measles.

It was found that the hospital was where 33.7% of the mothers chose to have their children immunised, followed by the PHC where 13.7% went while 10.2% went to private clinics and doctors.

Immunization: Girl Child's View

Percentage immunized

Girls were asked whether they knew about immunization and 68.9% of them did have some knowledge about it, while 30.6% did not know about the importance of immunization. They were also asked if their siblings had been immunized to which 26.6% reported that none of them had been immunized while 56.6% reported the both boys and girls had been immunized. About 9% of the girls did not comment on the matter.



Immunization of the Girl Child

Related to Father's Level of Education

Immunization : Relationship to Father's Education

A direct correlation was found between the level of the father's education and the number of girls who had been immunized. Almost all the fathers preferred to have their children immunized at a hospital with this preference increasing with the level of education. This percentage ranges from 22% of the non-literate fathers to 54% of the Tech/Professional fathers. The PHC and private clinics seem to be the next place preferred for immunization.

A direct relationship between the father's education and the percentage of girls immunized was found. The percentage ranges from 46% of the non-literate fathers having not immunized their child to 6% of the fathers in the Tech/Professional category. It was found that 39%(BCG), 37%(DPT/Polio) and 33%(Measles) of the girl children of the non-literate fathers had received these immunizations, while these percentages were more than doubled for the fathers who had Tech/Professional qualifications - 81% (BCG), 80% (DPT/Polio) and 66% (Measles).

Nutrition

Nutrition is important for the general health and well being of the girl child, and is a critical input in the early years.

Duration of Breast Milk

About 27% of the mothers breastfeed their children for less than a year while nearly 26% do it for more than a year and about 20% breastfeed their children for more than two years.

Age at which Milk Supplement was Given

Almost half (48 . 5%) of the sample mothers introduced a milk supplement before the first year of the child, while nearly 20% of them did so after the first year. Almost 29% said that they never supplemented breast milk.

Age at which Cereals were Given

The pattern of giving cereal food to the infant was parallel to the milk supplement. About 45% of the mothers introduced cereals before the child was a year old and 27 . 5% did so after the first year. About 24% of the mothers introduced cereals after a year and a half.

The project team tried to find out if there were any differential trends in the health and nutritional status of the male and female children in the family. Both the mother and the girl child were asked about the eating patterns followed in their households.

Order in which Meals are Taken

It was found that one-third of the families ate together and one-third in no specific order. However the data show us that in one-third of the families, the female members were the last to eat and the males of the family were the first to eat. The female members were never the first to eat.

Health Treatment

The team tried to analyze where the cases of more serious ailments such as cholera, typhoid, blood infection, small pox, TB etc. were treated and also whether there was any differential patterns of treatment for boys and girls.

Place Boys and Girls are Treated

The team found that 39.9%(boys) and 44.5%(girls) according to their parents were taken to private practitioners. The same proportion, 13.55% of the boys and 14.9% of the girls were taken to the dispensary for treatment. About 36% of the boys and 38.7% of the girls were taken to the hospitals for treatment.

When the team tried to study the kind of treatment provided to boys and girls, it was found that a large number of mothers (76.0%) for boys and (83.6%) for girls, preferred allopathic medicines. Very few (2.4%) preferred Ayurvedic/Unani/Homeopathic treatment for boys and girls. A negligible percentage went to Ojha/Tantric/Magic healers. Nearly 10% of them tried more than one kind of treatment or did not take any specific treatment.

Appearance

The research teams attempted to judge the health of the girl child by an informal study of her general appearance. This observation did not require any special training on the part of the observer. Different aspects of the girl such as skin, hair, nails and so on were noticed and are discussed below.

Skin

It was found that 18.6% of the sample had normal skin while 67.8% came in the 'any other' category.

Hair

A little over 50% of the girls did not have lice in their hair but almost 40% came in the yes/probably' category. 50.4% of the girls had normal healthy hair while 38.7% of the girls had dry brownish hair, and 1.5% had grey hair. About 67% of the girls had neat and well groomed hair while 25.4% had unkempt/dirty hair.

Hands

It was found that a little over 70% of the girls had clean and healthy looking hands while 24 . 9% had dry and dirty hands. The condition of their nails was as follows - 65% of the girls had healthy/clean nails while 31% had dry and dirty nails.

Feet

It was found that 62 . 2% of the girls had clean/healthy feet while almost 38% had dry and dirty feet.

Glow in Eyes

It was found that 78% of the girls seemed to have a sparkle in their eyes while 17% did not.

Activity

Almost 87% of the girls seemed to be normally active while 8% seemed less active.

Cheerfulness

Almost 90% of the girls seemed cheerful while 5 . 8% did not.

Environmental Factors : Hygiene and Sanitation

Environmental factors play a very important role in health. In both the urban slum and the village, the amenities are not evenly available to all, with some households being placed in a more advantageous locale. A detailed description of some locales are presented in the section on Area Profiles.

MENSTRUATION

Menstruation, a biological event, introduces dramatic, physical and social changes in the life of a girl child.

It was found that nearly 40% of the girls in our sample had reached puberty. Almost 25% of the girls did so between the ages of 12-14 years. In this analysis, the specific question aimed at menarche and puberty rituals were asked of only those girls who had attained menarche. **Thus the statistics in this section refer only to those 40% of the girls.**

Prior knowledge of Menarche and Source of Information

About 15% did have prior knowledge of menarche and 25% did not. It was found that 7.4% of the girls found out about menarche from their friends/neighbours while 5.6% found out from their mother and 3.6% from their sister/sister-in-law.

How Menarche was Handled

Nearly 24% of the girls went to someone for help during their first menstruation while 10.6% took measures to protect themselves, and only 4% were mentally prepared for the event.

It was found that in about 28% of the cases the mother helped the girl during her menses while in 5% of the cases, the sister/sister-in-law and in 2.2% of the cases, friends helped out.

Feelings and Problems of the Girls Child at Menarche

The most common experience of the girl child was that of feeling frightened (9.5%) followed by feeling shy (9.2%) and feeling nothing (9.2%). About 2.7% felt dirty and 2.8% felt uncomfortable.

A majority of the girls did not report any problems during their periods. About 9.7% said that they did have problems and the remedial measures adopted by them included taking rest (7.6%), taking pain killers (3%) and doing nothing (3.8%).

Puberty Rites and Rituals

About 32.8% of the girls said that their communities did celebrate the onset of menarche with rites and rituals while 41% said there were no such rituals.

Reaction to such rituals included the girl feeling shy (5 . 1%) feeling like a heroine (4 . 4%) disliking it (2 . 6%) and feeling nothing (3 . 1%).

Taboos and Restrictions

In several communities, various taboos and restrictions were observed.

About 27% of the girls did not have to change their diet after attaining puberty while about 5% did. The rest were not sure.

Taboos observed included restrictions on food (11 . 9%) on social contact (14 . 1%) on play (19 . 2%) on worship/religious rituals (31 . 3%) on baths (2 . 7%), on cooking (9 . 4%) on touching others (2 . 3%) and on going out/school (1 . 2%). Clearly, a different set of rules pertain to the girl child after she has attained puberty.

CHILD LABOUR

While a great deal of the time of children living in poverty is spent on working on the several tasks of maintaining and sustaining the household, child work is differentiated from child labour. On a small farm, all the members work together, the children interspersing agriculture-related tasks with going to school and with doing school work at home. Similarly, fetching water or fuel for the house is considered to be household work and is almost always taken on by women and girl children.

When there is a contractual element to the jobs done, with an understanding about the payment to be made it is referred to as Child Labour. So when questions were asked about child labour, it is apparent that only paid work outside the home was treated by the respondents as labour.

In the total sample, it was found that 87.3% of the girls did not perform any economic activity towards supplementing the family income. This percentage however, did not take into account girls who had undertaken work which contributed to the household occupation. This sort of work was considered to be part of their duty and was not seen as economic activity.

In the total sample, 12 . 7% of the girls did contribute towards the family income. A major part of the earnings was spent on the family and the girl herself kept virtually nothing out of her income. An in-depth analysis of the girl child and her work place was carried out.

All the percentages given below pertain to those cases which were applicable to the questions asked. From the survey it was found that, of the girls who were earning, about 4 . 7% (out of 12 . 7%) earned between Rs.100/- and Rs.300/- per month. Their period of payment varied: about 3 . 1% were paid daily and 2 . 4% paid weekly.

The payment in 4 . 8% of the cases was received by the girl herself and in 2 . 1% of the cases by the mother. Only 0 . 4% was saved for the girl or spent by her.

In about 5.9% of the cases, the parents/parents-in-law decided on how the income would be spent.

The sample also included questions about work satisfaction. About 7.0% were satisfied with their jobs. Some (2.5%) liked working because it made them economically independent and 1.4% disliked the drudgery and long hours of work.

When asked about their future plans many said that they wanted to pursue an education and become qualified.

CASE STUDIES

This section consists of six case studies and five brief case profiles. They have been chosen from several different participating centres and are intended to give a broad idea of the life and situation of the girl child.

The girls in these vignettes range in age from ten to eighteen years. Only two of the girls whose case studies are presented are in school. Most of the others have been forced to leave school for a variety of reasons (marriage, helping with household chores) or have never attended school. Taken together, the stories of these girls paint a picture of economic deprivation and a society with gross stereotypes of gender roles. Girls' aspirations for themselves are suppressed or ignored in the cause of social mores or the collective needs of the family.

The six case studies presented here are reasonably detailed descriptions of the daily routine, lifestyle and opportunities of the girls concerned. The profiles are succinct summaries that provide an overview of the lives of some of the girls included in the study.

The section provides the qualitative aspects of the lives of girl children, to be used as supplement to the quantitative data. As can be seen, the two aspects are mutually reflecting, each confirming the issues focussed by the other. These case studies also take us into the girl children's hopes and dreams, contrapunting their harsh reality.

AREA PROFILES

This study has attempted to look at the current situation of the girl child; opportunities, privileges, disadvantages, discrimination. However, it is meaningless to abstract the girl child from her environment. The society and community in which she lives, and the family environment in which she is raised, all play major roles in shaping her life. Moreover, the geographical area from which she comes also determines, to a large extent, how she spends her time and what activities fill her day.

Given the wide cross-section of geographical areas that the children in this study come from, it was thought prudent to summarise a few area profiles so as to give an idea of their lives in actuality. The statistical tables elsewhere in the study give an overall idea of the situation of the girl child in India. The area profiles in this chapter, profiles of selected areas in northern, southern, eastern and western parts of the country, help provide the reader with a picture of the settings in which all this activity takes place, and various environmental conditions that may be responsible for the chances, or lack of them in the life of the girl child.

Each of the collaborating teams sent in six area profiles (four rural and two urban) as part of the report. These were graphic descriptions of the settings from which the unit of hundred girl children was sampled. A few selected profiles are included.

INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES

A number of intervention programmes were incorporated into the research design and were implemented in the study sites for the project on the Girl Child and the Family. These intervention programmes were initiated by conducting in-depth interviews with the girls and the women of the village in order to identify major problems. Following this, programmes that would help ameliorate the situations were introduced.

The four basic areas covered by these intervention schemes were

a. Gender Awareness
b. Health
c. Literacy and Education
d. Environment and Sanitation

Gender Awareness

A number of recreational workshops where women were free to discuss their problems and other issues were organised. The topics discussed included widowhood, the genetic basis of the sex of a child, early marriage, the subservient status of the girl and so on.

Health

Several intervention programmes which centered on the improvement of the health of women and children were organised. In conjunction with local voluntary agencies, lectures and exhibitions on issues of health, hygiene, immunization, nutritional diets and family planning were also planned.

Education and Literacy

Many recreational and other workshops on topics of education and literacy were organised for adults and children of the villages. Novel methods, such as using theatre, arts, crafts, folk songs and dance, were used to focus on female foeticide/infanticide, child marriage, women's employment, literacy and so on.

Environment and Sanitation

Issues on environment and sanitation were also part of these intervention programmes. Many lectures and demonstrations on this were organised. The project team sometimes helped construct dry latrines for women and helped to clean the village water tank. They also stressed on subjects such as protection of forests, maintaining clean environment, community health and other related issues.

CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

State Policy and Programmes: An Overview

One cannot write a conclusion to the report without taking a look at the Governmental efforts that aim to make the developmental process more effective, by ensuring its linkage to the grass roots and by being gender-sensitive. The paradigms of development have changed over the last few decades: We now see the terms "people's participation", "women's empowerment" and "growth with equity" used widely in policy statements.

The Indian Constitution has empowered the State to adopt measures of positive discrimination for neutralising the cumulative disadvantage suffered by any group. Women fall in such a category and Article 15(A) (e) makes it the fundamental duty of every citizen to uphold the dignity of women, by condemning any practice derogatory to them.

Some of the recent legislative measures specific to the girl child are as follows:

a) The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act of 1986 (which makes sexual exploitation of women and girls a cognizable offence)

b) Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961, amended 1986 (which makes dowry - related cruelty to girls and women a cognizable offence)

c) The Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1976 (which raises the girl's minimum age at marriage to 18).

The National Plan of Action for the Girl Child 1991 - 2000 integrates several sectors. Its major thrusts include survival, and protection and development of girl children, with gender-sensitivity built in at all levels.

The recent establishment (1990) of the National Commission for women is also likely to have positive long term effects on the wellbeing of girl children.

Through the Five year Plans from 1951 - 1997 we see changes in the major concepts concerning gender. In the First Five Year Plan, the concept of the **welfare** of women dominated. In the next five years, local organization was an emphasis and under the plan, Mahila Mandals were organised at the village level. Even upto 1974, the priority was for **education** of women and for provision of maternal and child health services.

In the Fifth Five Year Plan, there was a conceptual shift from **welfare** to **development,** thus doing away with the benefactor model of government. By the time the Sixth Five Year Plan was launched, the Status of Women Report had been published and one impact was the formal recognition of the area. Hence women's development was included as a separate sector, with emphasis on health, education and employment. The next plan continued the special focus on women, while the Eighth Plan (1992 - 97), currently in operation, calls for a more vigilant monitoring of programmes so that women can function as equal partners in the development process. The conceptual shift now is from **development** to **empowerment** of women.

The setting up of the Department of Women and Child Development under the Ministry of Human Resource Development is symbolic of the revitalisation of the Government machinery. It serves as a nodal dept. to guide, coordinate and review efforts for the development and implementation of the programmes for women and girl children. The Central Social Welfare Board provides the umbrella for the network of thousands of voluntary organisations working for women and children around the country. The National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development assists the Department in the areas of research and training. At all levels the important role of voluntary organizations in the cause of girl children has been acknowledged by the Government.

There are several schemes and programmes with the objective of making women self-reliant. Most of these interventions also have an effect on the life of the Girl Child. A few selected schemes are mentioned below:

Support to Training and Employment Projects (STEP) is aimed at upgrading the skills of assetless women and providing them with employment in traditional sectors. (This is for adult women, but as is known when women have regular employment, child labour will be rendered unnecessary, for the survival of the family).

Training - cum - Employment Scheme in non - traditional trades like Electronics, Electrical work, Manufacture, Fashion Technology, Office Management etc. includes adolescent girls in the programme.

Condensed courses of Education and Vocational Training, originally intended for adult women, also includes girls who may have dropped out of school.

The scheme of **Creches for Working/Ailing Mothers' Children** is now almost two decades old. There is provision for play and recreation, health care, nutrition and immunization of children from birth to five years of age. (These services help working mothers as well as school-going girl children, enabling them to leave the young child in safe hands).

Integrated Child Development Services Scheme (ICDS) Comprehensive, holistic and covering over 16 million children, from birth to 5 years of age it serves deprived and under - served communities in villages, tribal areas and urban slums, providing preschool education, immunization, health care, nutritional supplement, referrals and parent education. The largest and most comprehensive programme of its kind, its problem continues to be getting quality care to the under-privileged.

Scheme for Adolescent Girls: This uses the ICDS infrastructure and focuses on girls of 11 - 18 years who have dropped out of school. They are educated, trained and equipped to be social animators in their own neighbourhood, with communication, literacy and numeracy skills.

Early Childhood Education (ECE) Located in educationally backward states, children's centres designed to improve children's communication and cognitive skills are running under this scheme. They influence the continuation of girl children in primary school, stemming the dropout rate.

Programmes for women like **Rashtriya Mahila Kosh** (a national credit fund for women) and **Mahila Samriddhi Yojana** (a scheme to promote savings among poor women) as well as the scheme reserving **30% seats in Panchayats** for women are all bound to have an indirect favourable impact on the girl child.

The mothers with better access to capital, equipment and other resources as well as those with a stronger voice in self-government are definitely likely to be warriors on behalf of their girl children.

The analysis of the data reveals that despite the coverage of these and other schemes, there are several thrust areas that need immediate focus and attention. They are described below in simple terms.

Advocacy and Social Mobilization

The Situation in a capsule

The girl child in India is discriminated against even before birth. Studies on amniocentesis have shown that female foeticide is widespread. Figures on female infanticide are also high in several states. Even after the girl is born, she has to cope with deep - rooted gender stereotypes and prejudices. The birth of a girl is not celebrated. Girls usually stay home to help with household chores or look after younger siblings, while the boys are sent to school. At mealtimes, the girl waits till the men of the family have eaten before sitting down, with her mother and sisters, to her portion of the leftovers. At puberty, the girl finds her movements highly restricted; no longer is she allowed to move about freely. Marriage is now considered a priority. Once she is married, the girl is often harassed for bringing an inadequate dowry — or for producing a girl child. The whole cycle is reinforced and perpetuated.

Given this background, a full throated advocacy is essential. Changing social attitudes and initiating a process of social mobilization becomes imperative. The media can be used effectively for this purpose. Radio, television and the printed word are all potent carriers of the messages of gender equality and the value of the girl child. The mass media, however, do not reach all sections of the population. Therefore in addition to media representation, more traditional forms of communication should be used. Street plays, for example, are extremely popular, and prove to be a simple way of gaining people's support. Such methods which are the very life blood of voluntary organizations, will facilitate the outreach to the poor and the non-literate.

Special efforts must be made to develop a positive image of the girl child. Policy makers, planners and administrators must be sensitized to gender issues. These should then be incorporated into policy and implemented unerringly. Issues concerning the girl child should also be included in all public information efforts. Non - government agencies can and do contribute to awareness generation in a large way.

The needs and problems of adolescent girls constitute a category large enough to warrant special attention. Although the legal age of marriage for girls is 18, many girls (mostly in rural areas) are married before they reach this age. They often have children before they are physically mature, leading to high rates of maternal as well as infant mortality. Child development programmes should have a section specifically geared to the needs of adolescent girls. Girls in this age - group should also be provided a variety of opportunities for non - formal education and vocational training and for upgradation of skills.

Both Central and State Governments need to protect the interests of the girl child by formulating both policies and the mechanisms for their implementation. Constitutional mandates can be reinforced through strengthening the legal system and by speeding up its processes.

It is not enough, however, that the government intervenes merely by enacting new laws. There should be action for enforcing the existing legal provisions and for working at the prevention of legal violations. While governmental or voluntary agencies can work on specific aspects of social mobilisation, most important is that the family and community should be convinced of the need to allow the girl child to evolve to her full potential. The process of social mobilization set in motion must make the girl child everyone's concern. The girl must be empowered to enter the mainstream of social and economic activity, and encouraged to believe in herself as a valuable and contributing member of society.

Health

Infrastructure

References to the inadequacy of health facilities and their access have been made throughout the study. In the majority of rural areas there was no functional Primary Health Centre. If families who can afford it, prefer to go to private practitioners or take their children to the distant hospital, it is because local health centre or dispensary services are not available. Imperative, therefore, is the proper functioning of the PHC and the regular visits of doctors and auxiliary nurse midwives. These must be monitored by representatives of the community. As it stands, the health infrastructure is entirely unsatisfactory.

The response of the rural families to the Health Camps undertaken by the research teams is a clear indicator of the scarcity of well-informed face-to-face medical help being available in that area. It is hoped that the recent Panchayat elections around the country will put more power in the hands of the people and that their elected members will be made responsible to monitor the functioning of the health services. The women members of the Panchayat must take up among other tasks, that of monitoring the delivery of health services.

Among other specific suggestions is the full coverage of all the children in any village or slum for immunization. In our study, even the most advanced or developed village could not report a 100% immunization cover to the children. The schedule of required immunization is complicated and the ordinary unschooled mother is not going to be able to remember it. Calendars, posters, T. V. spots and the like should carry the information about the immunization schedule so that it is "over-learnt" and becomes part of the everyday vocabulary.

Raising the awareness for the need of immunization without providing the proper infrastructure may lead to frustration on a large scale. For instance, the cold chain must be maintained if the polio prevention shots are to be effective. There must be a doctor, nurse or para - professional to follow up the cases, as a single complication that is unattended results in loss of confidence that will take years to rebuild. Thus we see that if any scheme or programme is to be effective, it must have the combination of infrastructural facility and the right (educated) attitudes.

Most of the girl children in our sample had no exposure to the facts of life, for example, the relationship between menstruation and pregnancy was not explained to them. There was hardly any well - informed friendly person in the neighbourhood who could be a support to the growing girl child. Many mothers felt that there was no need to prepare the girl child for the experience of menarche. When menarche came, the girl child would be given hints on practical management of her menstrual periods. Generally there was no attempt to link up the event with the girl child's reproductive system or to give her any sex education at that point.

A review of the school books in the primary school reveals that they vary a great deal in different regions and states, but they have one thing in common. None of them includes the child's perspective : the curriculum tends to be adult - centred and the approach, one of talking down to children. In this context, we find the formal curriculum inadequate in providing the right kind of information or attitudes to the adolescent.

Educating girl children about their own physiology and anatomy is a priority item on the health agenda. Once the concept of menstruation being Nature's way of assuring continuity of the species is explained, the relationship between menstruation and pregnancy follows. The scientific explanation of how the sex of the infant is determined by the contribution of the father's genes needs to be linked up here. Although this is an abstract concept and likely to be uncomprehended in the beginning, its repeated telling becomes important in the face of the "blame" placed on women for producing daughters. Tracing the origin of the newborn's sex to the father will serve for sex education as well as for a scientific understanding of how the sex of the unborn child is determined.

In the process, the unique and indispensible function of the female in reproduction and nurturance of the next generation - and therefore of the continuity of the human species itself - should be made clear. Instead of being told only about the unwisdom of having too many children and other such cliches of family planning propaganda, the girl child should be given all the information she needs for choice in and control over her own life.

Education

We have observed that girl children are sent to school for shorter periods or not sent at all - and the reasons for such parental behaviour tend to be complex. Parents weigh the benefits of schooling against the expense of schooling, the need for the girl's labour for household tasks and child care, as well as the anticipated occupational openings for them. The direct costs, the hidden costs and the opportunity costs of girl's education are calculated and when parents feel that these add up substantially, overwhelming the positive values for schooling, they do not send their daughters to school. Convincing parents of the value of primary education will require education to be valued by everyone including the teachers and educational administrators.

Not only do we need to locate schools closer to communities and to increase the number of schools, especially single - sex schools where required, we need to provide the school with the basic amenities of drinking water and separate toilets for girls.

One of the most dismal findings of the study concerns the quality of the Library and the Laboratory in the schools available to the girl children. Upgrading these facilities should be the priority of the Primary School systems around the country. We hear frequent references to the "scientific temper" but not even the most elementary equipment is available to the ordinary school child — let alone the opportunity to explore and experiment. Laboratories must be provided in every Primary School. The same recommendation goes for the Library. A small well selected Library must be set up in every school and the children must have easy access. Expecting children to be more than merely literate is unrealistic in the presently functioning parched deserts that pass for schools. Children need to be able to handle books before they can become well - informed.

Even though there is no clearly established causal relationship between the number of female teachers in school and the enrolment of girl children, there is a positive correlation. The problem in India, especially in some regions, is the unavailability of female teachers. They often find it difficult to be mobile and to commute from long distances. Offering housing or transport assistance would help a little, but urban teachers are generally unwilling to settle in rural areas. If the school system is willing to settle for a lower educational qualification for the teacher and provide in-service training as in the Shiksha Karmi Programme in Rajasthan, for example, it would be a feasible strategy. Whatever is done will have to be worked out in the context of local conditions. For instance, any rural area will have some resource people whose contributions to the school system can be used and acknowledged. In every instance more locally available persons can be indentified, trained, employed, retrained and sustained, with the active involvement of voluntary organizations in that area.

Even parents without a formal education are capable of a cost-benefit analysis of educating girl children. It is a fact that the benefits are frequently invisible and set in the future, structured on a number of hypotheses, while the costs are immediate, real and tangible. Advocacy should take these factors into consideration; concurrently there must be the kind of social action by which the harvest of benefits can be reaped. In other words, persuading girls to attend school is desirable; but for the benefits of education to accrue, schools should be improved and the labour market opened up to provide employment to the educated.

We should be able to see that the infrastructure exists for every woman and girl child to save money and to have it in safe custody. Towards this end, a women's bank should be organised (in the model of SEWA Rural Bank for instance). All of these suggestions will become effective when a Mahila Mandal (local Women's group) starts functioning in every village.

In poor communities which have the practice of giving a "bride price" at the time of marriage, girls tend to be married off very early. Parents out of need, greed or avarice give away their young daughters in marriage in order to get the cash. The girl child thus becomes a commodity. The cash received from the transaction could be used to repair a house, repay a gambling debt or start a small business. A boy child's labour is also bartered away in similar ways, but the experience of being a commodity is worse for the girl child, as her sexual services may be in demand, in addition to her unpaid labour.

Every effort must be made to help women in slum, village or hamlet to have their own organization. Again in this matter, the work of NGO's is central. A Mahila Mandal should not be an implant, but be organic to the community with its roots in the local reality growing gradually and become the banyan tree providing the common meeting place and shelter that women and girl children need.

Since the setting up of this study about four years ago, some significant achievements have been made in the identification of culturally relevant and gender-oriented programmes. The advocacy of voluntary organizations and the women's collectives has resulted in the beginnings of a change in the attitudes of administrators and planners. However there is bound to be a time lag between the launching of a new idea and its full implementation. Advocacy should be aimed at reducing this time lag, by organizations serving a monitoring function.

This study has revealed that the involvement of women students of College and University in the problems of families living in poverty can be mutually enriching. Supported by the recent observations made of the Total Literacy Movement is a fact that cannot be overlooked: when more privileged members of the society play an active role in a development task, handling it with enthusiasm, energy and empathy, the chemistry of success is created. We need a sense of neighbourhood and a fellow feeling; we must base in that, our conviction that sisterhood is strong; and with that we must put our weight on the side of the girl child. The girl is in a category without a spokesman in society and we must raise our voices on her behalf. Let us do so in unison.

To summarise, the study confirmed many of the hunches and hypotheses with which it was begun i.e. that the birth of the girl child tends to be greeted with anaemic joy, if not grief, and that she continues to be treated within the family and outside as a second class citizen. The devaluation of the girl child has been deeply internalised at several levels of socio-economic status. Parental education and improvement of employment and income are naturally related to the girl's life chances. The clustering of the variables of disadvantage resulting in the downward spiral of poverty pushes the girl child to the nadir of subservience.

The self-image and self-esteem of the girl child must be enhanced and strengthened by activities and exercises with her as well as by changing the perspectives of the persons in her immediate environment. This may be achieved by a variety of methods, including intervention through the school's extra-curricular activities, theatre and puppet formats, displays and discussions.

The chance for the girl child to pick up a skill that can be used for economic betterment has to be provided in the village or urban neighbourhood. The girl children wish that they could use their education to support themselves and supplement family income.

The area profiles reveal drab and dusty neighbourhoods, frequently characterised by the phrase "nothing ever happens here". A Community Centre is essential - and for some hours of the day, it should be reserved for all the girl children in the community. Here non-formal education on health, the functioning of the woman's body and counselling for problems should be made available.

Economic activity is necessary for the girls to feel independent and capable of earning for their own needs. Focus on the employment of girls and women will have to become a priority with local planning.

It is not only changing attitudes and values that is necessary. A number of structural changes must be implemented, in order to free the girl from her present chain of household tasks.

- Poverty alleviation programmes, a more equitable public distribution system and minimum wages to adults will make it unnecessary to employ child labour.

- Creche and other child care facilities must be set up in school, factory and plantation, in order to enable the girl child to attend to her own needs.

- Attention must be paid to provision of clean drinking water within easy reach of households and revival of traditional water conservation methods and rain harvesting by the community. This is a categorical imperative as the girl child spends much time on fetching water.

- Re-introducing the concept of the commons to which all have access, and afforestation activities monitored by the community would be eco-friendly and reduce the drudgery of the girl child.

- Energising existing systems - the Primary and Secondary schools as well as the Primary Health Centre to function effectively and to be accountable to the people.

In all these, a working partnership is necessary between the Government, Voluntary Organizations and the community of women and children.

Photographs

Courtesy UNICEF — p.13, p.17, p.19, p.22, p.32.
Courtesy S. Anandalakshmy — Cover Page p.34, P.35.